

# Socialist Worker

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## THE EU ATTACKS REFUGEES

# BREAK UP THE BOSSSES' CLUB

## THE EU ATTACKS WORKERS

# VOTE LEAVE 23 JUNE

### JOB CUTS

**BHS worker—  
'The system is  
rigged against us'**

SOME 11,000 jobs are set to go after Duff & Phelps, administrators for BHS, failed to find a buyer for the retail chain.

Former boss Philip Green is thought to be worth £3 billion. One worker told Socialist Worker, "If I tried to do what Philip Green has done, I'd go to prison."

**>>Page 6**

### FRANCE



**Floods cannot  
wash away  
strike wave**

STRIKES CONTINUED to spread in France last week as part of a bitter revolt against the planned Work Law.

The law give bosses more power to sack workers, increase hours and cut pay. Rail workers in the main unions began an indefinite strike against the law.

**>>Pages 8, 10&11**

### EU REFERENDUM

**Should left vote  
in or out? Natalie  
Bennett debates**

GREEN PARTY leader Natalie Bennett and Joseph Choonara from the Socialist Workers Party debated in Manchester whether the left should argue to leave the European Union or stay.

Over 160 people came to hear the debate.

**>>Pages 14&15**

Pictures: PA  
Police attacking refugees at the Greek border (above) and confronting French workers (below)





## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'A small group of people who do very well out of the current system, and know Christine Lagarde and can go mwah mwah with her at Davos'**

Boris Johnson on his rivals. He attended the Davos summit for ten years, sometimes with IMF boss Lagarde

**'Obama said in his speech that Muslims are our sports heroes. What sport is he talking about?'**

US Republican Donald Trump

**'Muhammad Ali is dead at 74! A truly great champion and a wonderful guy'**

Donald Trump

**'Muhammad Ali said far more inflammatory/racist things about white people than Donald Trump ever has about Muslims'**

Piers Morgan, who works for the Mail Online



# Chilcot may clear Campbell, but Blair gets his guns ready

**SPIN DOCTOR** Alastair Campbell is set to be cleared by the Chilcot Inquiry, despite his role in "sexing up" the intelligence that helped push Britain into the war in Iraq.

Or so claims the Sunday Times newspaper. It claims full blame for the dodgy dossier's presentation will be pinned on Tony Blair and former intelligence chiefs Sir Richard Dearlove and Sir John Scarlett.

It was supposed to contain evidence of weapons of mass destruction

Blair is said to be particularly concerned at how brutally he is criticised in the report and how strongly it suggests he lied to parliament.

It would take a heart of stone not to laugh.

In a legal process known as Maxwellisation, all those

**TONY BLAIR and Alastair Campbell**

criticised in the report have been informed by letter and have seen the relevant passage.

It is appropriately named after the late dodgy news baron Robert Maxwell.

Campbell has apparently

not received one of those letters, meaning, effectively that the inquiry has not criticised him.

It is seven years since then prime minister Gordon Brown ordered retired civil servant Sir John Chilcot to lead a

committee "to learn the lessons of the complex and often controversial events" that saw Britain join the US in going to war in Iraq.

One anonymous source told the Sunday Times, "Campbell has not had a letter. He is in the clear." An ally of the former prime minister told the paper the "lying issue is the greatest concern" to Blair.

No doubt they were not the same source and did not used to place stories in the press for Blair.

The source said Blair would "come out all guns blazing".

Which in the circumstances seems an unfortunate turn of phrase.

Families of the 179 British soldiers who died in Iraq were told they may have to pay £767 for a hard copy of the report. The government later backtracked.

**TRANSPORT FOR London (TfL)** staff bulletin reports 50 people from the Fit for the Future stations team enjoyed a meal in the "luxurious setting of the RAF Club". The team "celebrated the successful completion of the main ticket office closure programme". Apart from those who lost their jobs, "a good time was had by all," especially any among the 402 TfL staff trousering over £100,000 a year.

Nothing too good for the sackers

**PRETTY MUCH** everything is a marketing opportunity for one low cost Irish-owned airline. So to prove it the firm sent out this week the following missive, "We urge all British citizens to vote Remain on 23rd June. Just don't miss the registration deadline of 7th June. And don't miss our £19.99 seats to Europe."

## Posho nightclub waters down the fizzy drinks

**THE FAVOURITE** nightclub of princes William and Harry filled £360 bottles of Dom Perignon champagne with cheap prosecco.

It also filled Grey Goose and Belvedere vodka bottles—sold for £260—with 1860 Imperial vodka priced £10.

Customers charged £360 for Dom Perignon would face a mark-up of a dizzying 3,900 percent if served the phoney bottles.

Tables at the plush south west London venue came with a minimum spend of £500 to £1,500.

Platinum Parties, a website flogging tables and VIP booths, said, "All tables include the

**A prince at a club**

minimum spends worth of bottles of your choice from a menu provided.

All bottles are brought out to you with fireworks. For example, on a £1,000-spend table you could choose (roughly) 1 x magnum Grey Goose (1.5L) 1 x Dom Perignon (750ml)."

Boujis closed its doors earlier this year following a string of incidents.

## Senior Tory guilty of child abuse images?

**A FORMER** senior aide to prime minister David Cameron has been convicted of downloading pictures of girls as young as ten in sexual poses.

Patrick Rock faced 20 charges of making an indecent photograph of a child.

Rock had been involved in drawing up government policy on internet pornography filters prior to his arrest.

The jury in his trial at Southwark Crown Court in London convicted him by majority verdict of five counts.

He was acquitted of three similar charges. Judge Alistair

**Patrick Rock**

McCreath sentenced Rock to a two-year conditional discharge on each count, to run concurrently.

The judge said, "The punishment for you is the loss of your reputation and your very public humiliation."

Rock resigned his Downing Street post in February 2014 just prior to his arrest.

## McKinsey manages loot

**THE** management consultancy McKinsey has a secretive investment fund for partners which can buy or sell into companies run by its staff.

McKinsey's main business is advising clients on activities which could affect their share prices.

From Vodafone's Vittorio Colao to Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg, to Lloyds' Lord Blackwell to Credit Suisse's Tidjane Thiam, McKinseyites run more major companies than Troublemaker can mention.

Former employees include William Hague and the Bank of England's Charlotte Hogg.



## FAT CAT OF THE WEEK

**Mike Ashley, Sports Direct boss**

●The billionaire boss has, after stalling for a while, agreed to answer questions at a parliamentary committee

●Temporary workers at Sports Direct receive an effective hourly pay rate below the minimum wage

●Workers are subjected to compulsory searches at the end of shifts and deductions from their pay for late attendance

## £206,000 on a croc feed bag

**A DIAMOND**-studded crocodile skin handbag fetched a world record £206,000 at auction. A private collector snapped up the rare version of a Hermes Birkin bag.

Its albino Nile crocodile skin exterior was treated to turn it into a creamy white and grey colour—to imitate the Himalayas.

It was lined with goatskin, dyed to match the exterior.

The bag has a padlock looped through an 18-carat gold, diamond encrusted clasp which secures two leather gold and diamond straps.

It was hand stitched and is an adaptation of a sack designed in 1892 to hold horse feed.

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# The convoy is a protest at state attacks on refugees

by DAVE SEWELL

**HUNDREDS OF anti-racists from across Britain plan to join a solidarity convoy to Calais on Saturday 18 June in support of refugees and migrants.**

It is organised by Stand Up to Racism (SUTR), the People's Assembly and several trade unions.

The convoy is winning widespread support including from parts of the Labour Party. In Bristol newly elected mayor Marvin Rees will see off the convoy delegation.

Labour councillors in Doncaster are doing the same thing. In Sheffield local MP Louise Haigh has arranged for her constituency office to collect donations.

Some 150 people attended a fundraising meal in the city, provided by the Heeley Asian Women's Group and the Bfawu food workers' union. It raised over £950.

Activist Ebru Garnett told Socialist Worker, "Women in headscarves, bearded hipsters, grannies and kids all joined together in the spirit of the evening. We listened to poetry, music and what the convoy stood for. It was bloody brilliant."

Bristol will send a big delegation to the convoy. Some 300 demonstrators marched there last Saturday against the fascist South West Infidels group.

## Chanting

Only 18 Nazis turned up. Protesters chanting "Refugees welcome here" drowned them out.

Four minibuses and several cars of people from Bristol are already booked on the convoy.

Meg, a student at Bristol's UWE university, told Socialist Worker, "We should be doing everything we can to help the people in Calais."

"We're all people, and the way they're being portrayed is just scapegoating. They are fleeing horrible



**BIG PROTESTS in March showed solidarity with refugees and anger at the government**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## GET INVOLVED WITH THE CONVOY

- Rally on Friday 17 June, 6pm at London's Emmanuel Centre
- Assemble your vehicles on Whitehall at 8.30am on 18 June
- Rally at 9.30am at Parliament Square—the convoy aims to depart for Dover at 10.30am
- Catch the ferry from Dover to Calais at 2pm, arrive at 4pm
- Join the closing rally in Calais at 7pm and leave the camp at 9pm
- Email [calaisconvoy@gmail.com](mailto:calaisconvoy@gmail.com)

things. I'd flee too if it was me."

Waltham Forest SUTR in east London held a "Breaking Borders" art auction last Saturday to raise money for the convoy. Local artists donated over 100 artworks and it raised £7,500.

In Nottingham, mosques, union branches and refugee campaigns are working with SUTR. The CWU communication workers' union branch is bringing a minibus and donating £400.

Conditions for refugees and migrants in Calais remain dire—as social workers and teachers visiting there last weekend found (see right). So supplies, including money, are

desperately needed. But the convoy is about more than that. There is no reason for anyone to be stuck in Calais.

The only solution is letting the refugees into Britain—and that means building a movement that can pressure the racist Tory government.

As Meg said, "As well as practical support it's a protest at how governments across Europe are treating refugees. We need to show more solidarity with them."

## More online

For more details, go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)

## Support from social workers

SOME 50 social workers from the Social Work Action Network (Swan) were in the Calais "jungle" last weekend.

Similar events took place in Croatia, Germany, Turkey and Greece in a Europe-wide day of social work solidarity with refugees.

In Calais some social workers interviewed refugees. Syrian, Kurdish, Somali and Afghan refugees talked about the horrors that forced them to leave their country. Others set up art and sport projects or helped with basic English teaching.

Reports of the visits will be published in a report to the European and national parliaments.

This is part of the Swan campaign to open borders and welcome refugees.

**Michael Lavalette**

## EU's deal is deadly

**MORE THAN 133 dead bodies from a shipwreck of refugees trying to reach Europe washed up on the Libyan coast last week.**

Three quarters were women and at least five were children, most of them sub-Saharan African, the Red Crescent reported.

So far more than 40,000 people have made the crossing from Libya or Egypt to Italy this year—and over 2,000 have died trying.

A European Union (EU) deal to deport refugees in Greece to Turkey has driven more people onto the longer, deadlier route to Italy.

## Marxism 2016 Ideas to change the world

Five days of meetings and debate  
30 June - 4 July  
Central London  
Hosted by the Socialist Workers Party

### Speakers include:

**Sheila Coleman** from the Hillsborough Justice Campaign

**Tariq Ali** on the American empire and its discontents

**John Bellamy Foster** speaks on the Anthropocene and the global ecological crisis

**Green Party leader Natalie Bennett** debates where next after the EU referendum? with **Joseph Choonara**

**FBU general secretary Matt Wrack** and **CWU general secretary Dave Ward** will join a panel to discuss unions in the era of Corbynism

**Jack Shenker** talks about his new book *The Egyptians: a Radical Story*

**Michael Roberts** looks at robots and artificial intelligence

**Kate Evans** discusses her book *Red Rosa: a Graphic Biography of Rosa Luxemburg*

**Stathis Kouvelakis** and **Panos Garganas** debate Syriza and Greece

**Irish TDs Brid Smith** and **Richard Boyd Barrett** on Ireland's new politics

**Hsiao-Hung Pai** on her book *Angry White People*

### TIMETABLE OUT NOW!



To get your copy or buy tickets call 020 7840 5620 [marxismfestival.org.uk](http://marxismfestival.org.uk)

### IN THIS WEEK

# 1999

### Tory Jonathan Aitken is jailed

**FORMER** cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken was sentenced to 18 months for perjury and perverting the course of justice on 8 June 1999.

He served less than seven months after lying during a failed libel action.





# By backing EU, Corbyn only helps his enemies

Labour leader's speech threw away a chance to reshape the referendum, reports Tomáš Tengely-Evans

**PRESSURE FROM the Labour right and union leaders has forced Jeremy Corbyn to campaign harder for Britain to remain in the European Union (EU).**

He told the GMB union's conference in Bournemouth last Sunday, "I support Remain and reform, because we can change a lot."

"The Tory Brexiters think that the 24 June will be a bonfire of regulations, but they're all things the trade unions here and our colleagues in Europe fought for."

Supporting the EU was one of the first public commitments Corbyn made after being elected leader last September. He opposed the EU bosses' club, but changed his position to try and unite the Labour Party.

Corbyn has tried to make a left wing case for Remain to justify his shift, and he has not campaigned alongside David Cameron.

At a Labour In campaign meeting in Cardiff on Friday of last week Corbyn warned against "leaving Europe to the free marketeers and big business".

He said, "We want a Europe of the solidarity of socialist parties, trade unions and people that want to see a decent society."

But such a thing is not on offer from the EU. It is a dangerous myth

## BACK STORY

**David Cameron called a referendum on the EU to heal bitter divisions in the Tory party**

- Most of the establishment backs a Remain vote—but so does much of the centre left
- Bosses want Britain to stay in an EU built to meet their needs
- The EU's Fortress Europe policies are killing refugees
- EU bodies enforced austerity on Greece through its bailout
- New polls suggest most poorer people will vote to Leave the EU

to suggest that is what voters will get if they vote Remain.

Labour's "socialist" allies include the French Socialist Party sending in cops against striking workers and Germany's Social Democrats who are in coalition with Angela Merkel's Tories.

## President

And the next president of the EU is Slovak social democrat Robert Fico. He said "Islam has no place in Slovakia" and that "migrants cannot be integrated, it's simply impossible".

Corbyn's stance has not united

**CAMPAIGNING FOR a Remain vote was one of Jeremy Corbyn's first commitments as Labour leader**

the party—and it's not just the right on the attack. Former deputy leader John Prescott said, "It seems as if we are just enjoying the fight in the Conservative Party."

"But that is not putting Labour's position."

GMB union general secretary Tim Roache said he was concerned Corbyn was being "mealy mouthed" about the referendum.

He said, "Labour needs to be a bit braver in taking on the issues in working people's minds and whether we like it or not that's immigration."

At a fringe meeting at GMB conference Roache slammed the racist

scapegoating of migrants. "Migrants come here to work and contribute—let's start by having a dig at the exploiter, not the exploited," he said.

So Corbyn said that "it doesn't make people Little Englanders, xenophobes or racists" to worry about immigration.

"Some communities can change dramatically and rapidly and that can be disconcerting for some people. More people living in an area can put real pressure on local services like GPs surgeries, schools and housing."

But rightly he did go on to say,

"This isn't the fault of migrants, it's a failure of government."

Had Corbyn come out for Leave he would have transformed the EU debate.

It would have been less racist and much more about class, austerity and positive views of refugees.

His stance on the EU now both lines Labour up with the Tories and bosses—and strengthens the Labour right.



## On other pages...

Natalie Bennett and Joseph Choonara debate >> **Pages 14&15**

# EU doesn't protect our rights

**MOST TRADE** union leaders, including the Unite, Unison and GMB heads, have urged union members to vote Remain on 23 June.

In a joint letter to the Guardian newspaper they claimed that the Tories would "negotiate away our rights" if Britain leaves the EU.

But the rights they

mentioned were not handed down by the EU. Maternity rights in Britain are well above EU standards, for example.

They were won through workers' struggles—and only struggles will protect them. A Remain vote will strengthen David Cameron to push through more attacks on workers' rights.

More on page 15

**GMB leader Tim Roache**

# How far will unions back Labour left?

**RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE** for Jeremy Corbyn at the GMB union's conference in Bournemouth last Sunday underlined trade unionists' support for the left wing Labour leadership.

Andrew Alleyne from the Southern region told Socialist Worker it reminded him why he joined Labour after Corbyn was elected leader.

He added, "You don't always see the message come through in the cut and thrust of politics."

"He needs to do more of what he did today to get the message out."

Delegates found it "totally different" to previous years—when Labour leaders lectured workers on the need to accept some austerity.

Gwylan Brinkworth from Wales and South West region told Socialist Worker, "I supported Corbyn to be leader because we needed someone who was unashamedly a socialist."

GMB general secretary Tim Roache said the union would defend Corbyn from the right. He said it was "absolutely willing" to deselect right wing MPs who are undermining his leadership.

But while many union leaders disliked New Labour, they aren't on the left. In the clash over Trident nuclear weapons the GMB's leadership is siding with the right.

Andrew said, "I understand the Blairite argument that you've got to look to the 'middle ground', but you shouldn't kowtow to it and abandon principles."

# Polls reveal class divide —with poor voting Leave

**MANY RIGHT wingers are concerned that large numbers of working class people will not back Remain without Labour mobilising its supporters.**

A YouGov poll in the bosses' Financial Times' newspaper said "the inhabitants of less prosperous regions such as the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside are more likely to favour Brexit". Over 60 percent of those in the poorer "C2" and "DE" groups also favour Leave.

Left wing supporters of the European Union (EU) often claim that those against it are Ukip supporters and racists.

But this poll shows that many working class people oppose the EU for different reasons.

Ukip's four million votes in the last election and some Tory votes don't account for the 11 million or more expected to back Leave.

But lining up with David Cameron's Remain campaign can drive people towards the right.

Green Party leader Natalie Bennett—part of the supposedly radical 'Another Europe is



**New pals Cameron and Harman**

Possible"—appeared alongside David Cameron and Lib Dem leader Tim Farron on Monday.

This sort of move will strengthen the bosses' hand and damage the left.

A leading "Another Europe is Possible" figure is collapsing into the bosses' Remain campaign.

**Socialist Worker**  
**WHAT WE THINK**

# LEAVE VOTE WILL WEAKEN OUR RIGHT WING ENEMIES

**WHAT'S THE** European Union (EU) referendum really about? According to some of the leading campaigners, it's about anything but the EU.

This is particularly the case for Remain supporters, who are trying to win over Labour voters.

The closer people look at the EU itself, the harder it is to defend. So we're told voting Remain is really about stopping the hard right.

Labour MPs Cat Smith, Wes Streeting and Stephen Kinnock went so far as to call a potential Leave vote "a populist, nationalist, right wing coup".

Much of this argument relies on painting one wing of the Tory party as much nicer than the other.

## Trusted

Former Tory prime minister John Major said that Boris Johnson, Iain Duncan Smith and Michael Gove can't be trusted with the NHS—he's right. But neither can David Cameron, George Osborne, Theresa May or Jeremy Hunt.

Attacks on immigration have been central to the debate—on both sides.

Left wing Remain supporters argue that Leave would be a vindication of racist Nigel Farage. But then Remain would vindicate Cameron's border clampdowns.

Too much of the left muted its case against the EU for fear of competing on the racists' terrain—and ended up giving the racists the monopoly.

But polls show far more working class support for Leave than for anti-immigrant parties (see left).

Seeing fat cats, police chiefs and Tory toffs line up to scare them into line will give many people reason to defy them.

A vote to Remain would shore up the EU's faltering mandate to



**Johnson would head a shattered Tory party unable to withstand real resistance**

# PUT BLAIR IN THE DOCK

**FORMER LABOUR** prime minister Tony Blair's grip on reality has seemed weak for some time now.

He is preparing to defend himself after the Chilcot Inquiry's report into Britain's involvement in the 2003 Iraq war is published on 6 July.

The war, based on lies, killed a million people.

But some of Blair's anonymous "friends" have said he will defend himself by suggesting the Middle East would be more unstable if the

war had not happened.

It's almost as if he hasn't noticed the chaos in Iraq today.

The Iraqi army—backed by British and US warplanes—is fighting a war with Isis, which has controlled northern Iraq since 2014.

For two weeks they have been waging a bloody battle for the Iraqi city Fallujah, where an estimated 50,000 Iraqi civilians are trapped.

The idea that the invasion in 2003 made Iraq more stable is a

sick joke.

Blair wants to pretend the bloodshed has nothing to do with him. But the chaos today is a direct result of the war he helped to start more than ten years ago.

When Chilcot is published Blair will be in the spotlight and his lies will be exposed—again.

The war criminal must pay the price. It's disgusting that some anti-racists have been suspended from the Labour Party on spurious antisemitism charges, yet this mass murderer remains a member.

**A Corbyn-led Leave campaign could have marginalised Boris Johnson's racist one**

## CAMPAIGN

**Socialist Worker supports Lexit—the Left Leave campaign**

- To find out more go to [leftleave.org.uk](http://leftleave.org.uk)



# London says #Lexit

**The left case against the EU**

Speakers include writer Tariq Ali, Sally Campbell (SWP), Mick Lynch (RMT) and Lindsey German (Counterfire)

**7.30pm, Mon 13 June  
Camden Centre, WC1H 9JE**





## ANALYSIS

SIMON BASKETTER



## The EU vote—what would Churchill do?

**DAVID CAMERON believes that Winston Churchill would vote Remain on 23 June.**

Boris Johnson claims that Churchill would have been a Brexiter. Who is right? Who cares? Tories.

Churchill was a determined defender of the interests of the British ruling class. The Tories have spent most of their history ensuring that they are the natural party to express that interest.

Yet they are in a mess over Europe.

Remember Cameron didn't want to have this referendum. He wanted to persuade Tories to stop "banging on about Europe".

Yet here he is, leading a party that does nothing but bang on about Europe and whose members talk about decapitating him over the very same referendum he called to please them.

So former Tory prime minister John Major stuck his oar in last weekend. Major dismissed Johnson as a "court jester" and accused him of overseeing a "squalid" campaign.

On Johnson and Tory minister Michael Gove he said, "The NHS is about as safe with them as a pet hamster would be with a hungry python."

All of which in its own way is true enough.

In contrast Gove boasted of being on the side of the people, not arrogant, gilded elites. Which is an interesting pitch from an Oxford-educated lord chancellor, privy councillor and justice secretary.

Cameron and Johnson took to BBC's Countryfile to thrash out the finer points of making things up about Europe. Cameron was filmed next to sheep—no pigs being available.

And through it all there is competitive racism. The key thing is who is doing the most to keep foreigners out.

So George Osborne stuck on his well worn high vis jacket and said, "It would be a pretty crazy way to try and control immigration to push your country into a recession. That would be entirely self-defeating."

Which is sort of where the campaign has got to on both sides. The EU will save or destroy the economy and it will let in or keep out all the immigrants.

Osborne and Johnson have been sniping at each other for months. The referendum campaign lets them do it more openly and more obliquely.

### Poisonous

They both share the right sort of education for top Tory. Both are poisonous.

Importantly the rows in the Tory party always reflect real things. The bosses are divided on Europe—and so, therefore, are the Tories.

Margaret Thatcher failed to stem Britain's global decline. One consequence was a fragmenting of the British ruling class consensus in favour of European integration.

Tory factionalism in the 1990s onwards over Europe became a code for wider political differences.

The Conservatives responded to Labour's 1997 landslide win by electing the most right wing, Eurosceptic leaders possible.

First came William Hague, then Iain Duncan Smith. In desperation, they turned to Michael Howard.

Each responded to defeat by seeking to mobilise the Tory "core" vote. They did so by highlighting the "dog-whistle" issues of Europe, immigration and taxes—the so-called "Tebbit trinity".

One result is that the Tory party is now essentially Eurosceptic—including those arguing for Remain.

By 2005, in a further attempt at rebranding, the party chose David Cameron to lead them out of the quagmire. He did for a while but the underlying contradiction seeps out.

So a Leave vote ends Cameron. A narrow Remain means he'll go early.

A strong Remain vote will mean Cameron chooses his own departure date. But at least 30 troublesome Eurosceptics could make the Tory majority meaningless.

That is far from the only reason to vote Leave (see pages 14&15) but it's not a bad one.

The argument against is Vote Leave—Get Boris. But why Vote Remain—Get Osborne is any more desirable is not clear. The division in the Tories needs to be pushed open. A vote to Leave can only help that.

# BHS worker—'The system is rigged against people like me'

by ALISTAIR FARROW

**SOME 11,000 jobs are set to go after Duff & Phelps, administrators for BHS, failed to find a buyer for the retail chain.**

BHS has 163 stores across the UK.

Former boss Philip Green is thought to be worth £3 billion. He recently splashed out on a £100 million superyacht.

Green sold the chain to Dominic Chappell for £1 last year and left the company with a £571 million deficit in its pension fund.

Green had refused to pay more than £10 million a year into it—while giving his wife, who doesn't pay tax in Britain, £1.2 billion in dividends.

The terms of the government's Pension Protection Fund (PPF) means workers face a 10 percent cut in their pensions thanks to Philip Green's greed.

And they don't yet know what kind of redundancy deal they'll be offered.

Workers at BHS spoke to Socialist Worker.

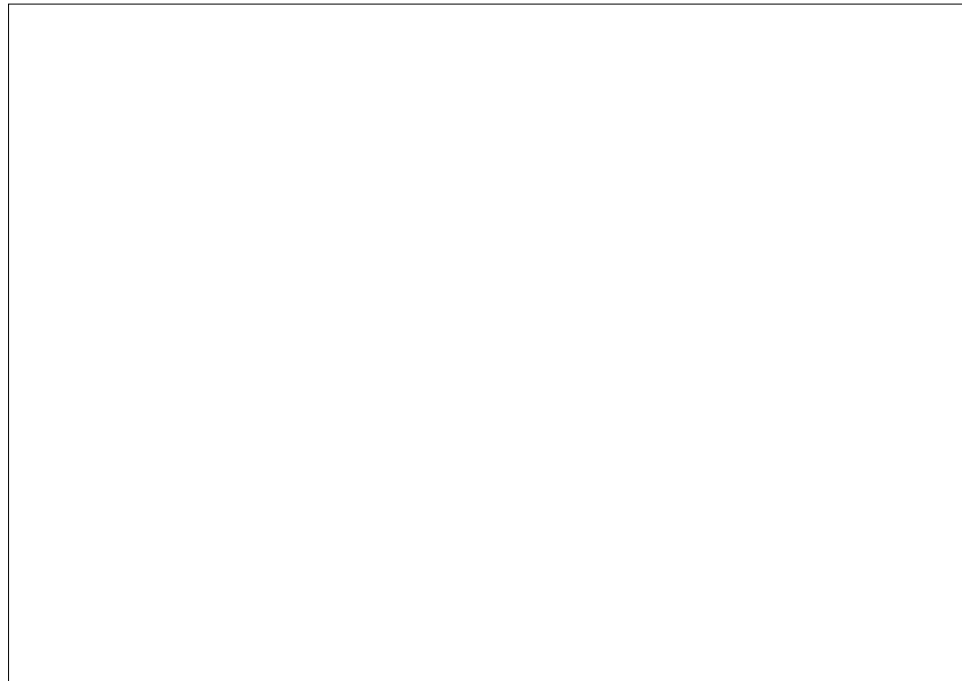
### Qualifications

"One of my managers is over 50," said Siyad. "She's been here since she was 16. She has no qualifications apart from retail and is not going to get anywhere near her full pension."

"There are people who have been here for five, ten, even 30 years. They have to get something."

"To give your life to a company and then, instead of being told 'thank you', getting a slap in the face is disgusting."

Another worker said, "If



**BILLIONAIRE BOSS Philip Green (left) sold off BHS (main) and left workers worse off**

which have stands in the stores, have been ordered by their management not to speak out. Some of their jobs could be relocated, but most will go.

Out of the 11,000 jobs set to go, 8,000 workers are employed directly by BHS and 3,000 on concessionary stands in the stores.

One security guard said, "I've been here five years. Us security guards aren't employed by BHS."

"But there will still be job losses because the company's contract with BHS has been cancelled."

"Dominic Chappell's a vulture. He said he'd change things. He did nothing."

"When Philip Green sold the company for £1 everyone

knew it was going to shut down."

Details of the sale are due in coming weeks. The response from the Usdaw union has been mealy-mouthed.

"There are some very serious questions which need to be answered", said national officer Dave Gill.

There should be resistance and exposure of the scandal.

One canteen worker summed up how many feel. "All we were told is that it's eight weeks before the store closes and we lose our jobs. What can I say? We're nothing to them, they don't care."



### Got a story?

Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

by NICK CLARK

**AN INQUEST into the death of north London teenager Henry Hicks was set to begin on Monday of next week.**

Henry died in a crash in December 2014 after police officers in unmarked cars chased him on his moped.

He was just 18 years old when he died.

Henry's family say he had been the victim of police harassment.

They said Henry had been stopped and searched



Demanding justice for Henry Hicks

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

as many as 156 times, despite never having had a conviction.

Four police officers involved in the chase are to appear as witnesses at the inquest.

But they will be giving evidence from behind a screen, and will only be visible to Henry's family.

Coroner Mary Hassell decided to give the officers anonymity, after police said they had received death threats on social media.

Go to [Justice for Henry Hicks](https://www.facebook.com/JusticeForHenryHicks) on Facebook for more information

# Bosses stall on deal but museums strike solid

PCS union members in Wales are building solidarity as talks are set for this week, writes Nick Clark

**STRIKING MUSEUM** workers hoovered up solidarity at the Merthyr Rising festival in South Wales last Sunday.

The PCS union members led a trade union march at the festival and raised an estimated £200 for the strike fund.

PCS assistant branch secretary Geraint Parfitt told Socialist Worker, "It was really good."

"We met lots of people and had people with buckets going all over the place."

Workers at museum sites across Wales have been on all-out strike since the end of April.

They have been fighting for more than two years against bosses' plans to scrap their week-end premiums.

The plans could see some low paid workers lose as much as £3,000 a year.

Strikers were set to hold a rally in Cardiff on Thursday followed by a members' meeting.

The meeting will follow talks between PCS officials and museum management.

## Dispute

Bosses have been stalling since the Welsh government intervened in the dispute in the middle of last month.

Welsh economy minister Ken Skates was said to have helped to broker a deal which PCS Wales had said was "virtually guaranteed" to be accepted by its members.

But that was followed by two weeks of silence from bosses after they took the deal to their board of trustees at the end of last month.

Geraint said, "We had a meeting with the government and had a deal, but the management are saying they still need to get it agreed by the trustees."

"It's coming up to three weeks now and we still don't know what's going on."

"But if that's the way they want to play it, fine."

"I'm getting quite a nice strike tan out on the picket line every day."

## SOLIDARITY

### ●Donate to the strike fund

Bank: Unity Trust Bank Account Name: PCS Amgueddfa Cymru 107006 Branch Hardship Fund Account number: 20364700 Sort code: 60-83-01

### ●Invite a striker to speak at your branch meeting. Email branch secretary Peter Hill at [dennishill20@hotmail.com](mailto:dennishill20@hotmail.com)

### ●Keep up to date with solidarity events by following the **Hands Off our Weekend—Fair pay in National Museums Wales** page on Facebook

In the meantime, a number of solidarity fundraising events were set to take place for the strikers across Britain to help them keep going.

Strikers and their supporters were set to rally in Swansea on Wednesday evening, with speakers from the NUM and Unison unions.

Plaid Cymru Welsh Assembly Member Bethan Jenkins was also set to speak.

Supporters in London were set to be joined by strikers for a solidarity social on Friday.

And PCS members in Birmingham were set to welcome Geraint to a public meeting in support of the strike on Thursday.

Geraint said, "We're getting support from all over the place."

"Cardiff trades council have been collecting for us."

"Two local branches of the RMT union have given money."

"And we're raising money on the picket lines every day."



A UCU striker in Leeds

WORKERS AT the Big Pit museum and other National Museum Wales sites have struck since April

## Lecturers vote to continue battle over pay but don't want 'symbolic gestures'

by SADIE ROBINSON

THE PAY fight in higher education was a key debate at the UCU union's annual congress in Liverpool last week. UCU members in universities held a two-day national strike last month for a pay rise and an end to pay inequality.

Delegates in the union's higher education sector conference backed a plan to begin a setting, marking and assessment boycott in the autumn. "Rolling strikes" will support this action.

Conference supported a plan for branches to choose a date throughout the summer to strike. But delegates rejected a national strike in August.

The vote reflected anger towards union officials. Many delegates wanted more say in the union's strategy and felt the leadership has imposed a plan with little consultation.

The strikes throughout

the summer can have an impact. Jo McNeil from the North West spoke to a meeting of activists organised by UCU regions.

She said bosses were so worried about the prospect of summer strikes that they had contacted lawyers. "We've got them on the back foot," she said.

Importantly higher education delegates passed a motion calling on the leadership to "accept its responsibility to implement national policy in response to punitive pay docking".

## Policy

The union has policy of calling national action if bosses dock 100 percent pay for action short of a strike.

The UCU plans a national demonstration to defend education in the autumn, along with the National Union of Students and potentially other unions.

UCU members said the wider political context is motivating people to fight.

Karen Evans is on the UCU branch committee at Liverpool university. She told Socialist Worker, "People want the strikes to have a political impact. They

feel this dispute is bigger than about pay."

The NUT teachers' union is balloting members across England for strikes over the impact of Tory education policies. The ballot ends on 22 June and the union plans to strike in early July.

A majority of the conference, 100 to 52, voted in favour of debating an emergency motion on calling a national strike alongside the NUT. But the leadership said it would need a two thirds majority to get onto the agenda.

However, UCU branches could plan their local summer strike to coincide with the NUT. And the union could coordinate action with the NUT on a national level in the autumn. Last month's strike showed the potential to build a bigger campaign.

Xanthe is a casualised worker at Leicester university. "We had a better turnout than in recent years," she said. "There were lots of new faces."

Xanthe said there are big debates "because people are taking the dispute seriously". "They want more than symbolic gestures," she added. "They want to win."

More on UCU at [bit.ly/1TWqUrf](http://bit.ly/1TWqUrf)



# Floods can't wash away the strikes in France

Workers bring France to a standstill days before the Euro 2016 football tournament, reports **Dave Sewell**

**STRIKES CONTINUED** to spread last week as part of a bitter revolt against the planned Work Law.

The law give bosses more power to sack workers, increase their hours or cut their pay.

France is hosting the Euro 2016 football tournament, set to start this Friday. But French president Francois Hollande said on Sunday, "I want this conflict to be over".

He claimed, "Nobody will understand it" if rail and aviation strikes stop fans getting to football matches.

Rail workers in the main unions began an indefinite strike against the Work Law and an attack on their conditions last Tuesday.

Sud union rep Fabien Villedieu told colleagues at a 200-strong mass meeting at the Gare de Lyon station in Paris, "We're not just going to sit back over our working conditions for the sake of 2.5 million football fans. If we have to wreck the Euros, we'll wreck it."

Bosses, politicians and the media have sought to play down the strike's impact. But nearly half of train services have been cancelled, costing bosses £16 million a day.

## Strikes

Last Thursday saw a new day of coordinated strikes against the Work Law. Alongside ongoing strikes in oil refineries (see pages 10&11) there were walkouts in ports and nuclear plants. Some regions saw power cuts.

The CGT union punished Pierre Gattaz, head of the powerful bosses' union Medef, for comments attacking them the previous week. They cut off electricity to his second home and his factory.

In other regions they moved hundreds of thousands of customers onto off-peak tariffs, in an "Operation Robin Hood" that also saw protesters open some toll roads.

Parisian bus drivers began their walkout that day too. Hundreds invaded the bus company's offices on Friday morning.

Major floods in parts of France

## BACK STORY

**The French government's Work Law has sparked resistance**

- The Work Law would force workers to work for longer hours
- It would allow bosses to undermine national union agreements. And it would give them more powers to sack workers
- But powerful sections of workers are shutting down the economy in protest at the law

only increased the strike's impact.

The government averted an air traffic controllers' strike planned last weekend by agreeing to stop job cuts—though not before many flights had been cancelled. But pilots plan to strike over pay this weekend.

The Work Law is now set to be debated in France's senate, where the Tory opposition has a majority.

Senators' committee amendments, such as abolishing the 35-hour working week, make the law much harsher. In a surreal twist, the government called a rally of its own on Wednesday to defend "social progress" and the Work Law.

Between horrifying police repression and concessions to split off some groups of workers, the government is gambling that the movement will run out of steam.

Union leaders' aim of "bringing them back to the negotiating table" makes this a real possibility.

The CGT union leaders cannot be trusted to call the general strike that would defeat the Work Law and open up a new potential for resistance to austerity.

But activists are going all out to build more strikes for the movement's first national demonstration next Tuesday when the senate debate begins.



**On other pages...**

Le Havre, heart of the strike wave against Work Law >> Pages 10&11



RAIL WORKERS in the Sud union protest in Paris over the Work Law

PICTURE: PHOTOTHEQUE ROUGE/JMB

# Populist right wins in Italian elections

ITALY'S POPULIST 5-Star Movement moved one step closer to governing the capital Rome on Monday.

Returns released from nationwide municipal elections over the weekend took its candidate to a runoff vote in two weeks' time.

## Far right

The 5-Star candidate Virginia Raggi got around 37 percent of the vote. Roberto Giachetti, from the centre-left Democratic Party (PD), only just got more than far right candidate Giorgia Meloni.

A victory for the movement would be a blow to the center-left government of prime

minister Matteo Renzi. His Democratic Party candidates struggled in the first round of voting in many Italian cities.

## Corruption

A series of corruption scandals have added to the sense of decay around the government.

The previous PD mayor of Rome resigned after an expenses scandal.

The PD came to office after voters rejected austerity, only to pursue cuts at a slightly slower speed than the European Unio has demanded.

The 5-Star Movement campaigns on corruption but has demanded more clampdowns on migrants.



Virginia Raggi, the 5-Star candidate

## FIGURE IT OUT

**£260 million**  
amount Croatia government needs to cut from budget to get into eurozone

**£23.5 billion**  
amount of state-owned assets—the Croatia state is selling off as part of their bid

**2.7%** of GDP set to be cut from the budget

# Croatian education protests

OVER 40,000 people marched in 12 cities in Croatia, including 25,000 in the capital Zagreb, against the right wing coalition stalling education reforms last Wednesday.

It was organised by the "Croatia Can Do Better" initiative, which is backed by many trade unions.

The previous Labour-type

government set up a panel in 2014 to overhaul education, but the panel resigned last week under nationalist pressure.

Education minister Predrag Sustar is from the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) party, a reactionary organisation.

The right's rise has been fuelled partly by disillusionment with

the European Union (EU), which Croatia joined in 2013.

The EU has demanded austerity measures from its newest member state and the right is using the refugee crisis to whip up nationalism.

But the protests were a sign of deep-seated anger against a right wing coalition that could fall.

**Tomáš Tengely-Evans**



## We had EU debate—and voted on it

JIM NICHOL (Letters, 1 June) calls for Socialist Worker to change its position on the European Union (EU) referendum as a Leave vote will cheer the right in Britain and Europe.

Let's look at Britain. It is David Cameron whipping up racism against refugees and migrants and who was central to the most foul campaign of Islamophobia during the London mayoral election.

Many leading right wing Tory ministers are for Remain and use racism.

Why does Jim think the majority of big corporations fighting to remain in the EU are doing so?

The left has to put forward an independent position.

It can't wait until the stars are perfectly aligned before it drops its opposition to the EU.

The pressure for Jeremy Corbyn to shift his position to Remain clearly came from the Labour right.

Lastly, Jim calling for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to change its position on the EU referendum is interesting.

He will be aware of the debate that began at our annual Marxism festival and to which he contributed.

That continued in meetings and through Socialist Worker, Socialist Review and International Socialism Journal.

After open debate, SWP conference overwhelmingly voted for the position put forward by Socialist Worker.

Huw Williams  
Bristol



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## Being black is political—let's stay united against racism

THERE WAS intense debate at the black students' conference of the National Union of Students (NUS) last month about how we identify which culture we belong to and how we fight oppression.

At first glance the motion that provoked the debate may seem trivial but it has a serious political message at its core. It proposed to only elect a black students' officer who is "ethnically black", or to change the name of the campaign.

The motion was voted down but it's an important argument.

This year the NUS Black Students campaign celebrates its 20th anniversary. It was built out of tireless anti-racist campaigning to unify non white students who

suffered from racism to fight back. Black is a political expression of a common experience uniting students in a common struggle.

The argument against using the word black in this way argues that black is a specific identity, which tells us how we should act.

Socialists reject this. Regardless of race people have different experiences. An "ethnically black" person in Ghana has a different experience to someone from London.

It is not our ethnicity which decides how we act.

This argument comes at a time when Muslims, predominantly Asian and Arab, are at the sharp end of racism. These students play leading roles in the campaign.

To carve out the activism of Asian and Arab students to prioritise the action of "ethnically black" students is divisive.

We need to stay united — especially when the new NUS president Malia Bouattia faces huge pressure and establishment racism.

Splitting into small groups based on where we're from undermines the fight against oppression. Dividing the largest, organised progressive force inside the NUS will only serve to further boost the racists and the right wing.

Our focus must be to stop Prevent, solidarity with refugees and to kick fascists off the streets.

Antony Hamilton  
West London

## We can tip the balance in favour of refugees

ONE OF the most important political tasks we can do right now is challenging lies about refugees and racism.

After a local Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) rally my union branch put a motion to our regional RMT union council arguing for solidarity with refugees. It came up as news broke of yet more drownings at sea.

It wasn't a difficult issue to raise. As another member argued, it's the trade union movement's responsibility to act on this issue. At work you might come up against

arguments that immigrants put pressure on services, jobs or housing.

But taking the arguments on is crucial—and you find that things are not quite as brutal as they seem, despite the racism of politicians. What we do can help tip the balance and counter them.

We voted to donate £250 of practical support for refugees. I'm going back to my branch to get people to come and see off the convoy to Calais with me.

Jane Gwyn  
South London

READING BRIAN Richardson's obituary of Muhammad Ali on Socialist Worker's website reminded me of a time when I saw Ali's impact on working class men in prison.

I showed the documentary film about the Rumble in the Jungle, When We Were Kings, to an evening class of black, Asian and white men in Pentonville Prison.

Men who often couldn't sit still for 15 minutes, with all kinds of literacy and behavioural problems followed Ali's every word.

They smiled at each

other, laughing at his jokes.

And they didn't take their eyes off him when Ali pointed out that Zaire was poor but its airline was staffed by black people, while rich America wouldn't let black people

fly. As the film was so long, I had to show it in two halves and I thought that the men might not come back a week later.

But word had got round and twice as many came to see the second half.

Muhammad Ali moved these men deeply because it was the first time they had seen a famous black man with razor sharp wit demanding respect and freedom for himself and people like him—and them.

Sarah Ensor  
Manchester

Read the Muhammad Ali obituary on page 13

Just a thought...

## Take a lead on fracking

I APPRECIATED the excellent article by Kim Hunter on fracking (Socialist Worker, 25 May).

I was surprised she didn't mention the danger of fracking liquid polluting water supplies.

It is possibly the issue that gets people most involved in opposing fracking and would affect many people, not just those living near a fracking pad.

The decision by North Yorkshire County Council to allow fracking takes the issue to a new level.

The frackers will be rubbing their hands with glee and planning many more applications.

I hope Socialist Worker will take a lead in trying to coordinate the opposition that there is to fracking.

Gilbert Morrey  
Scarborough

## Battering elite for 40 years

AS A long term reader of Socialist Worker (it was first sold to me outside a job centre in Hull in 1977) I do much to praise your newspaper.

You've been battering the capitalist elite for over 40 years.

Elijah Traven  
Hull

## Well done for the Whatsapp

LOVE READING articles sent direct through the new Socialist Worker Whatsapp service.

I like being pointed to the key articles and reading them on my phone.

Jess Edwards  
South London

## Strikes better than voting

REGARDING your article about the current wave of strikes and protests across France against the Hollande government's new Work Law (Socialist Worker, 1 June).

I am very happy that French workers are finally standing together with the same political goal, especially if they kick out the ruling oligarchy for it.

I prefer them striking rather than voting for bloody Le Pen.

Axel Kiebooms  
on Facebook



**P**ROTESTERS IN France have dubbed port town Le Havre as the “capital of the strike” against the Labour-type government’s proposed Work Law. Striking oil workers at the port have cut off crucial fuel supplies at a key choke point for French capitalism.

With its sprawling refinery complex, Le Havre is one of France’s main sources for oil imports.

Mathias Jeanne, the local CGT union secretary, has been picketing the Cim oil terminal. He told Socialist Worker, “No more boats are coming into the depots, which means we’re not sending a drop to Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris.

“The strike here really has consequences.”

Refinery workers in Le Havre were key to starting petrol shortages last month. Thierry Defresne is the CGT rep at the Total oil refinery, where workers have been striking for over two weeks.

He told Socialist Worker, “The strike had an immediate effect. People know prices will go up so they rush to fill up and then they’re afraid it’ll run out.”

President Francois Hollande’s government rushed in police to break up road blocks at oil depots and bosses desperately fought to source more fuel.

This eased the shortage, but most refineries are still shut and the strikes are putting them under immense strain.

Thierry explained, “The situation has been stabilised because Total has now got 1,000 tankers on the road every day, instead of the usual 300.

“But some of the depots are drying up without the refineries supplying them, so Total has to bring produce in from further and further away.

### Losses

“It’s logistically very difficult for them—and the losses run into the tens of millions of euros every day.

“To hurt them you have to hit them in their wallets—and that’s what we’re doing.”

Bosses haven’t been taking it lying down and there have been tense standoffs between them and workers.

The government ordered the Cim bosses to let some fuel through, but the CGT withdrew safety cover in response.

Now a small number of scabs live under siege on the site, knowing they

# FUEL ON THE FIRE

## OIL WORKERS IN LE HAVRE HAVE A POWER THEY AREN’T AFRAID TO USE, THEY TOLD DAVE SEWELL

won’t get back in past the picket line if they leave.

Workers warn that this strike-breaking could have deadly consequences. Mathias said, “When we’re working there are 30 people per shift, but there’s just 17 of them around the clock.

“It’s a huge site—and the fuels in those silos aren’t exactly chocolate! They are putting the whole population of Le Havre at risk.”

Outside the Total refinery stand the burnt remains of a statue. It was destroyed by the bonfire that workers lit to stop strikebreaking on Friday 27 May.

Worker Benjamin Desjardins told Socialist Worker, “We have an understanding with the bosses that

no lorries come in or out whenever there’s a strike. But they tried to send out 300 lorries to Paris.

“That would have been really bad for us and the media would have used it to make it look like we’d started the refinery back up again.”

For eight hours workers held firm and blocked the refinery entrance. “In the end they had to give up and respect the strike conditions,” said Benjamin.

“Now they are trying to do it again, but this time without us finding out.

“So we’re holding a meeting with the workers at the petrochemical plant across the road to discuss a joint strategy.”

**T**HE OIL workers have been at the forefront of the fight in recent weeks, but they are part of a larger revolt. Benjamin said, “I’ve been on strike a few times in recent years, but this time there’s a bit more of a groundswell.

“People are starting to realise what’s at stake—and you can see on the demonstrations how motivated they are.

“They’re angry at the government over this new law, and they’re sick of their living conditions in general.”

Benjamin said there was a “groundswell of solidarity”.

He said, “We’re fighting for ourselves, but we’re also fighting for everyone.

“There are people who can’t strike themselves but who support us, who beep their horns, who bring food or money. There are polls suggesting



PICKETS BURN tyres at the Cim oil terminal (top), Le Havre CGT secretary Mathias Jeanne (above left), Total refinery CGT rep Thierry Defresne (above right)

PICTURES: SOCIALIST WORKER

## ‘The rights our ancestors fought for are at stake’

WORKERS IN France have fought for rights—not least in Le Havre, a stronghold of the movement—for over a century.

Now they are fighting to defend the Work Code that enshrines those rights in law.

Benjamin said, “We’re striking against the Work Law, which contains dozens of pages of measures that would massacre the Work Code we have today.

“It turns the current values on their head—worse local agreements will be able to override the national Work Code.

“Instead of the minimum guaranteed, it will become the maximum.

“That means so many gains will disappear—whether it’s paid leave, overtime rights, wages, time off, the limit on the hours young people can work.”

Organised workers in big industries are among those with the most to lose.

Thierry said, “Today workers in the oil sector benefit

from a good collective national agreement. They can’t stand the idea of having it wiped out.”

The government argues that the Work Law will boost employment.

But by making it easier to sack some workers and make others work longer, it allows bosses to keep their workforce to a minimum.

Benjamin said, “It creates an enormous risk for us and for society—and also for employment.

“The truth is, this isn’t what creates jobs.”

The other big lie is that attacks on workers are about “modernising”.

Some measures in the Work Law would roll back workers’ rights to the level they were last at over 80 years ago.

Thierry said, “All the rights we’ve won through our national agreement are the fruits of big struggles by our ancestors.

“That’s what’s at stake in this fight—holding onto those gains.”



In danger—France’s Work Code of rights

**“To hurt them you have to hit them in their wallets—and that’s what we’re doing”**



Dockers march to a protest against the Work Law (top), rally in the town’s main square (above), refinery worker Benjamin Desjardins (above left), hospital rep Frederic Le Touze (above right)

three quarters of the population are against the Work Law.

“There’s a lot of poverty and unemployment in France, and these are people who have already been suffering for several years.”

**N**O ONE is more aware of this than workers and patients at Le Havre hospital. Around a third of its workers have joined “Hospital on our feet” assemblies, launched out of the Nuit Debut (“Night on our feet”) movement of square occupations.

SUD union lead health and safety rep Frederic Le Touze told Socialist Worker, “There’s a lack of funding for staff.

“There’s a lack of funding for equipment right down to sheets and blankets. You’ve got patients sleeping on mattresses on the floor, or in converted offices.”

The departure of two doctors nearly meant one psychiatric unit was closed, though their campaign stopped this.

But their fight doesn’t stop with defending health services.

### Mobilising

The big public sector unions have largely stayed out of the fight against the Work Law, which mainly targets the private sector. Mobilising them could make a huge difference.

Frederic explained, “As trade unionists we’re seeking to make the links. We’re trying to show colleagues that the Work Law does affect them.

“Even if the majority are currently

## ‘Workers are democratic—unlike our government’

POLICE IN Le Havre have held off from attacking protesters or strikers because the dockers’ union threatened to shut down the docks in response.

But in other areas the repression has been brutal.

Cops used water cannons to clear a road block at a refinery at Fos-sur-Mer in the south.

But this can backfire on the state.

Thierry said, “When you use force like that, it shows you have no chance of convincing anyone and only want to shut up the social movements.

“Each time it’s led to a multiplication of blockades or of strikes.

“One refinery that hadn’t started striking went out spontaneously after police attacks on blockades of three depots.

“So it’s been a very bad method for the government, because they’ve been doing our work for us.”

The Work Law only got through the lower house of the French parliament because Hollande suspended

parliamentary debate.

“That was really the straw that broke the camel’s back—it really got workers angry and it’s the reason there are picket lines here now,” said Mathias.

“We’d been holding partial strikes since 9 March, but we went up a level after that. Now we’re really going hard at it with indefinite strikes.”

Hollande used the notorious article 49.3 of the French constitution—something he once denounced as a “denial of democracy”.

Mathias said, “We can’t accept the 49.3, even if it is in the constitution. We elect MPs.

“It’s not right that they can’t debate the law and vote.

“In the union when we go for a strike we get workers together and hold a vote—that’s a difference between us and the government.”



French president Francois Hollande

employed by the public sector, more and more are being privatised and for them the Work Law’s provisions apply straight away.

“Politicians of both right and centre left want to attack public services, and in the long term the measures in the Work Law will all be applied to the public sector.

“And it’s all part of a neoliberal politics of destroying the rights we’ve won.”

### Spreading

There’s a limit to the repression and hardship that workers in a few key sectors can stand up to alone—spreading the action is crucial.

Thierry said, “We’ve been saying from the start that refinery workers

on their own can’t force the government to repeal this law.

“We need other sectors to join the fight. Only all together can we make the government yield.”

Frederic agreed, “I think it’s possible to win.

“So far we’ve not put all our forces into the battle—there are still key sectors that could get going.

“It wouldn’t be the first time that laws have been passed but never been applied.”

Mathias said, “In capitalism it’s about the balance of power.

“As long as the workers are out in the streets, as long as we have strikes, it’s us who decides what happens. It’s up to the people, not the people with the money.”



Workers at the Total petrochemical factory vote to oppose the Work Law



Strikers at the port sprayed a declaration of human rights onto a shipping container

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

### ESSEX

**After the EU referendum, where next for the fight against the Tories?**

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

### HUDDERSFIELD

**Racism, resistance and revolution**

Wed 15 Jun, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade,  
HD1 5JP

### LONDON: WEST LONDON

**Racism, resistance and revolution**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
West London Trade Union Club,  
33-35 High St, Acton,  
W3 6ND

### MEDWAY

**Racism, resistance and revolution**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Nucleus Arts Centre  
(Conference Room),  
272 High St,  
ME4 4BP

### ROTHERHAM

**Racism, resistance and revolution**

Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,  
Talbot Lane Methodist  
Church Centre,  
Moorgate St,  
S60 2EY

### TELFORD

**Capitalism in crisis—was Marx right?**

Thu 23 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Carriages,  
The Parade,  
Wellington,  
TF1 1PY

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### BARNLEY

**Are robots taking all our jobs?**

Thu 16 Jun, 6.30pm,  
YMCA,  
Blucher St,  
S70 1AP

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

**Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left**

Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

### BOLTON

**James Connolly and the 1916 Easter Rising**

Thu 16 Jun, 6.30pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St,  
BL1 1DY

### BRADFORD

**Why are students and workers kicking off in France?**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Glyde House,  
Little Horton Lane,  
BD5 0BQ

### BRIGHTON

**The housing crisis today**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St,  
BN1 1AF

### BRISTOL

**Marxism and human nature**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
YHA,  
14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

### BURNLEY

**Secrets, spies and the state**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Red Triangle Cafe,  
160 St James's St,  
BB11 1NR

### CAMBRIDGE

**A rebel's guide to Lenin**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Signal Box,  
Glenalmond Avenue,  
CB2 8DB

# Marxism 2016

## Ideas to change the world

Highlights at this year's festival include...

**THE AMERICAN EMPIRE AND ITS DISCONTENTS**  
with writer and journalist Tariq Ali  
Fri 1 Jul, 4.15pm,



Writer Tariq Ali

**ISRAEL—THE APARTHEID STATE**  
with author Ilan Pappé  
Sat 2 Jul, 11.45am,

**THE ANTHROPOCENE AND THE GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL CRISIS**  
John Bellamy Foster  
Sat 2 Jul, 2.30pm,

**HOW CAN WE FIGHT TO SAVE OUR NHS?**

With junior doctor Mona Kamal,  
NHS student bursary campaigner  
Danielle Tiplady and other leading health workers and activists  
Sat 2 Jul, 4.15pm,

30 June—4 July  
central London

A five day political festival hosted by the SWP

Book now [marxismfestival.org.uk](http://marxismfestival.org.uk)

### CARDIFF

**The Spanish Civil War**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

### CHELMSFORD

**Is socialism possible?**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd,  
CM1 2QL

### CHESTERFIELD

**Marxism and ecology**

Pamphlet launch with author Martin Empson.  
Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

### COLCHESTER

**What do we mean by a united front?**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
The Odd One Out,  
28 Mersea Rd,  
CO2 7ET

### COVENTRY

**Where now for the Bernie Sanders movement? An eye witness update from the US**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
West Indian Centre,  
159 Spon St,  
CV1 3BB

### DONCASTER

**Marxism and ecology**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Women's Centre,  
21 Cleveland St,  
DN1 3EH

### DUDLEY

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Wed 15 Jun, 8pm,  
The What Centre,  
23 Coventry St,  
DY8 1EP

### DUNDEE

**The case against immigration controls**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd,  
DD1 1LL

### EDINBURGH

**Remembering the Spanish Civil War 80 years on**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

### EXETER

**The Spanish civil war—lessons for today**

Thu 23 Jun, 7pm,  
New Horizon Cafe,  
47 Longbrook St,  
EX4 6AW

### GLASGOW: NORTH

**Was there ever a golden age of Labour?**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Fred Paton Centre,  
19 Carrington St, G4 9AJ

### GLASGOW: SOUTH

**Marxism and mental health**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Govanhill Baths,  
99 Calder St, G42 7RA

### HARLOW

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
1 Church Leys,  
CM18 6BX

### LANCASTER

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

**Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore  
Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

### LONDON: BRIXTON

**Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left**

Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd, SW2 1EP

### LONDON: EALING

**Can we stop the destruction of council housing?**

Thu 23 Jun, 7.30pm,  
West London Trade Union Club,  
33-35 High St, Acton,  
W3 6ND

### LONDON: HACKNEY

**Corbyn and the unions—what's going on?**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd,  
E5 0PU

### LONDON: HARINGEY

**Racism, sexism, homophobia—what do Marxists say about oppression?**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd  
N15 3QH

### LONDON: ISLINGTON

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St,  
N7 6QT

### LONDON: KINGSTON

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Kingston Quaker Centre,  
Fairfield East,  
KT1 2PT

### LONDON: LEWISHAM

**Pride, politics and protest—a Marxist analysis of LGBT+ oppression**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd,  
SE10 8JA

### LONDON: NEWHAM

**Capitalism in crisis—was Marx right?**

Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove,  
E15 1HP

### LONDON: SOUTHWARK

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Camberwell Leisure  
Centre (Room 2),  
Artichoke Place,  
SE5 8TS

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Wed 22 Jun, 7pm,  
Oxford House,  
Derbyshire St (opposite  
Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),  
E2 6HG

### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Quaker Meeting House,  
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),  
E17 4QU

### MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

**A rebel's guide to Rosa Luxemburg**

Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,  
Chorlton Central Church  
(Meeting Room),  
Barlow Moor Rd,  
M21 8BF

### MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

**The roots of women's oppression**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

**MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME**

**Paris Commune 1871—when workers took power**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Inspire,  
747 Stockport Rd,  
M19 3AR

### NEWCASTLE

**France—workers and students vs the government**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Broadacre House,  
Market St,  
NE1 6HQ

### NORWICH

**What do we mean by a united front?**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place,  
NR2 2SA

### NOTTINGHAM

**The myths of neoliberalism**

Wed 22 Jun, 7.30pm,  
International  
Community Centre,  
61b Mansfield Rd,  
NG1 3FN

### OXFORD

**Trump, Sanders and class struggle in the US**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Restore,  
Manzil Way, OX4 1YH

### POOLE

**Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left**

Mon 13 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Butler & Hops,  
88 High St,  
BH15 1DB

### PORTSMOUTH

**The fight to defend education**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown Central,  
Rivers St,  
PO5 4EY

### SCARBOROUGH

**Is socialism possible?**

Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,  
Scarborough Central Library  
(The Reading Room),  
Vernon Rd,  
YO11 2NN

### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

**What would a socialist society look like?**

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St,  
S1 2JB

### SOUTHAMPTON

**Refugees & borders**

Wed 22 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Central Baptist Church Hall,  
Devonshire Rd,  
SO15 2GY

### STALBANS

**Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left**

Tue 14 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Trinity Church Hall  
(upstairs),  
1 Beaconsfield Rd (near  
St Albans City station),  
AL1 3RD

### YORK

**What do socialists say about the mental health crisis?**

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4AH

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### AYRSHIRE

**Stand Up To Trump! Protest Donald Trump's visit to Britain**

Wed 22 Jun, 12 noon,  
Trump Turnberry,  
Turnberry,  
KA26 9LT

### BIRMINGHAM

**Unwelcome the Tory conference to Birmingham 2016**

Sun 2 Oct, 12 noon,  
Birmingham,

### COLCHESTER

**Debate—trade unions, the left and the EU referendum**

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Church St,  
CO1 1NF

### DORCHESTER

**After the EU referendum, where next for the fight against the Tories?**

Sat 9 Jul, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club,  
Colliton Park,  
DT1 1XJ.  
Organised by Dorset Socialists

### MANCHESTER

**No to racism in the EU referendum—a night of spoken word & DJs**

Fri 10 Jun, 8



# Muhammad Ali 1942-2016— he was the people's champion

Muhammad Ali not only fought in the boxing ring—he also took on the political and sporting authorities of the 1960s in the struggle against racism and war, writes **Brian Richardson**

**MUHAMMAD ALI** captivated the world when he became world heavyweight boxing champion in 1964. He mixed extraordinary grace and speed in the ring with a larger than life personality outside it.

He combined overt radical politics with an obvious pride in himself. He refused to let the media define who he was or how he should behave.

As Mike Marqusee, author of the brilliant biography *Redemption Song*, suggests, he was somebody who characterised “the spirit of the 1960s”.

Born Cassius Clay in Louisville, Kentucky, on 17 January 1942, he first came to international prominence when he won the light heavyweight boxing title at the 1960 Olympics in Rome.

Despite returning to his homeland as a champion, he was still subjected to the humiliating institutional discrimination that blighted the lives of black people in the US.

He was refused service at a “whites only” restaurant and was set upon by a gang of racists. He had trouble finding a hotel to stay when he travelled to fight.

## Bravado

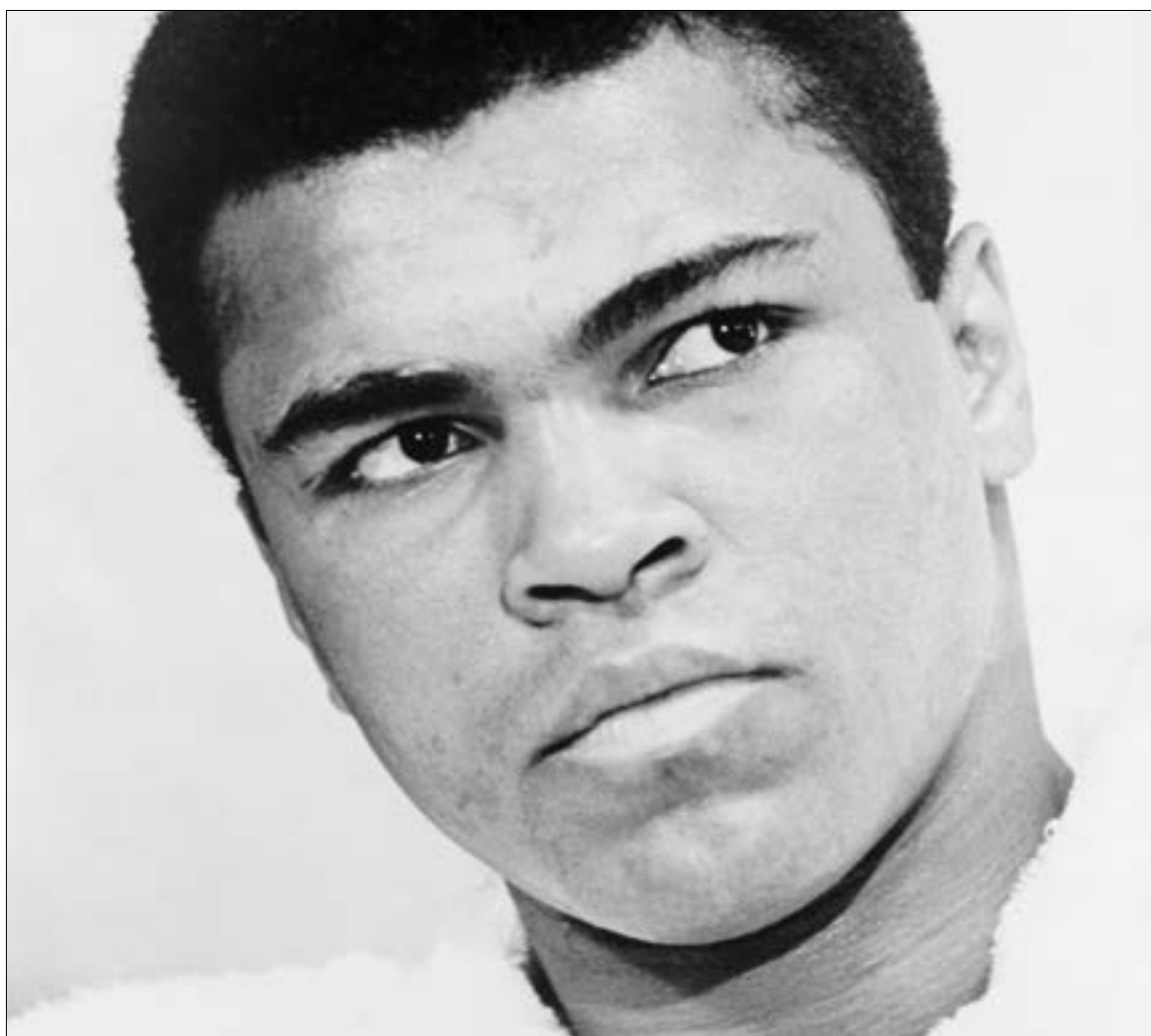
He shocked the sporting world by beating Sonny Liston to become world heavyweight champion.

Already he displayed the outspoken bravado for which he was famous. Interviewed in the ring immediately after the fight, he said, “I don’t have a mark on my face, and I upset Sonny Liston, and I just turned 22 years old. I must be the greatest.”

His own assessment of himself stuck. But the following morning he delivered an even more stunning blow when he confirmed the rumours of his involvement with the Nation of Islam.

This militant black separatist movement was growing in influence and challenging the hegemony of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement. Clay was being mentored by Malcolm X, the

Nation’s most charismatic figure. He



MUHAMMAD ALI

announced that he was changing his name. “Cassius Clay is a slave name. I didn’t choose it, and I didn’t want it. I am Muhammad Ali, a free name—it means beloved of God—and I insist people use it when speaking to me and of me.”

As a result of his radical activity, Ali’s white corporate sponsors, the boxing authorities and others including leading black boxers such as Floyd Patterson roundly denounced him for his lack of respect and gratitude.

Nobody could beat Ali in the ring, but three years later the US military tried to rein him in by drafting him to fight in the Vietnam War.

Ali’s response was clear and emphatic, “No, I am not going ten thousand miles from home to help murder and

burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slavemasters of the darker people the world over.”

He was at the height of his powers both physically and intellectually and knew that he was putting his livelihood and liberty at stake. But he remained steadfast.

The price Ali paid was a heavy one. He was convicted by an all white jury of evading the draft and sentenced to five years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.

Though he never actually served time in jail the threat remained until

his conviction was eventually overturned in June 1971.

Meanwhile he was stripped of his titles and governing bodies across the world, including the British Boxing Board of Control, revoked his licence to box.

## Principled

Ali’s principled stance was a sign of a growing mood of opposition to the Vietnam war.

He defiantly declared that he had nothing against the Vietnamese, saying, “They never called me nigger, they never lynched me, they didn’t put no dogs on me, they didn’t rob me of my nationality, rape and kill my mother and father. Shoot them for what? How can I shoot them poor people? Just take me to jail.”

Such an outspoken stance gave other dissenters and the wider movements against war and racism a huge boost.

Other sporting and cultural figures were to follow his lead, including the athletes who gave the famous Black Power salute at

the 1968 Mexico Olympics.

I still cherish the early childhood memory of Ali’s bouts in the mid 1970s, particularly the famous 1974 “Rumble in the Jungle” when he reclaimed his world title from George Foreman.

Back then very few black people appeared on TV and when they did it was invariably as villains, who were swiftly dispatched, or buffoons to be ridiculed.

For millions of us across the world, regardless of whether he was officially recognised or not, Ali was our champion, handsome, brash, brilliant and with a razor sharp wit.

He was not without fault. The manner in which he goaded his great rival Joe Frazier, dismissing him as an “ugly and ignorant gorilla”, was spiteful and played to racial stereotypes.

His decision to carry on fighting well beyond his peak was partly due to his own vanity.

But the primary reason was because of the greed of those who had exploited him throughout his career, stripping him of much of his wealth.

## Afflict

Ali finally retired after humiliating defeats against his former sparring partner Larry Holmes and journeyman Trevor Berbick in 1980 and 1981.

By this time he was suffering the early onset of the Parkinson’s Syndrome that was to afflict him so dramatically in later life.

As is so often the case with radical figures, there has been a concerted attempt to reinvent and sanitise Ali.

For example he was chosen to light the torch at the opening of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

He appeared as proud and defiant as ever, but one could not help but contrast the trembling figure with the magnificent athlete of his heyday.

The passage of the baton to a new generation is intended to symbolise the Olympic ideal but there was also a wider significance.

Here in the Deep South, the triumph of this black man was a further example of the enduring appeal of the American dream.

The organisers of London 2012 sought to repeat the feat by inviting Ali to carry the Olympic flag alongside figures such as Doreen Lawrence and Shami Chakrabarti.

Whether he was “the Greatest” as he himself so frequently claimed is a moot point among sports fans.

What should not be in doubt is that he was an outstanding and inspiring figure in the struggle against racism, war and imperialism.



A fighter against oppression

“Cassius Clay is a slave name. I didn’t choose it. I am Muhammad Ali





## Natalie Bennett We have to stay in and fight to reform EU



**W**E flourish best when we work together on the problems that we face.

The European Union (EU) has been a real leader on climate change.

To tackle it, we need to be part of a global effort with the EU as part of it.

We have to rein in the multinational companies and make them pay their taxes.

Even if we had a very different government, it's very difficult for Britain on its own to take on the multinational companies.

We have to work together as the peoples of Europe to rein in those multinationals and build a different sort of economy.

The EU has imposed a bankers' bonuses tax and the Tory government used our money to appeal against that decision.

The Green Party also believes the free movement of people enriches all of our lives. Ukip says immigration is a problem for the NHS.

But if you meet someone from Europe in the NHS they're most likely to be treating you.

### Privatisation

The NHS is under pressure because of Tory privatisation—that's not an argument against EU immigration.

But the Green Party campaign is called "Greens for a better Europe"—there's lots wrong in the EU and there's lots we want to reform.

The most obvious example is the proposed US/EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) free trade deal.

People are saying we have to leave the EU because of TTIP, but we need to be in there fighting to stop TTIP.

TTIP was supposed to be signed last year, but resistance across Europe

has ensured that it hasn't been.

The European Commission is far too powerful compared to the parliament, but there's an awful lot we need to change about Westminster.

People say the EU commissioners aren't elected, but I point to the House of Lords.

The answer in both cases is to stay in and fight to reform it.

What happens on 24 June if there is a "Brexit"? The Green Party would be drawing up a list of everything we've lost.

We'd have to fight for all the workers' rights, protections and rules all over

again in the current political climate.

Do we want to have to defend those while we take on the Tory government, neoliberalism and try to transform our society?

We should be voting to Remain—and then on June 24 focusing on the reforms we want in the EU and Britain.



Protesting against the US/EU trade deal TTIP

## Joseph Choonara We cannot rely on the EU or reform it



**T**HE European Union is another multinational organisation driving through neoliberal attacks.

We should think about it as we think of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation.

In Greece it is driving through the most appalling austerity and has actually fought off an IMF attempt to win debt reduction.

TTIP represents the most horrific attack on workers' rights and

environmental and social protection.

Some 3.4 million people signed a petition against it.

What did the European Commission do? Absolutely nothing.

The TUC claims that we have equal pay, health and safety and holidays thanks to the EU.

In reality equal pay legislation was won by women workers at Ford Dagenham going on strike.

We have some of the best health and safety legislation in the world because we won it in the 1970s, a time of mass workers' struggles.

The Tories want to lower it to the EU minimum and the EU is not



Head of ECB Mario Draghi and German chancellor Angela Merkel

holding back the assault.

We defend freedom of movement, but if you're a Syrian, Eritrean, Afghan or Iraqi you simply don't have it.

The EU and Turkey's barbaric deal means desperate refugees in Greece are sent back to a country that is bombing the Kurdish section of its population.

It means refugees have to seek more dangerous routes, which is why hundreds drowned in the Mediterranean last week.

That's the reality of Fortress Europe.

Many people say we need to change the EU, but no one has proposed a credible method.

You can't do it through the European Parliament. It doesn't even have the right to propose new legislation.

You can't do it through the EU bureaucracies. Who voted for the board of the European Central Bank?

Who voted for the European Commission?

### Democracy

There is simply no democracy, there's no capacity to reform it based on the existing institutions.

Some argue that leaving would mean moving even further to the right and being left at the mercies of a Boris Johnson government.

But the EU referendum is not strengthening the right, it's ripping apart the Conservative Party.

Without a stonking big victory David Cameron is gone and Johnson would inherit a damaged government that would not survive.

Either way, we have a big fight to transform British society and we cannot rely on the EU or reform it.

We should see it as a bosses' club and vote to leave it on a left wing basis to begin the break-up of that bosses club.

These are edited extracts of Natalie Bennett and Joseph Choonara's speeches

**T**HE LEFT debate on the EU in Manchester last Wednesday also had Labour Party member Sara Khan arguing for Remain and Eleni Michalopoulou from the Greek anti-capitalist coalition Antarsya for Leave.

Many people came because they're sickened by the official Remain and Leave campaign's right wing and racist politics. Sally, a recent graduate, told Socialist Worker, "I don't like the way the debate is framed around immigration."

"I came to hear both sides, but particularly the Green Party."

Most people backed a Remain position, but many were undecided about how they'd vote. Jose, a Spanish migrant, told Socialist Worker, "For the first time in my life, I don't know what position to take."

"I think that the left should unite across Europe, but the problem is there's no democracy in the EU."

He added, "It needs to change, but I don't know how it can—if Britain leaves maybe the EU will wake up?"

### Immigration

One of people's biggest concerns was defending migrants' and refugees' rights. Amy asked from the floor, "Will it be worse for migrants the day after? Would David Cameron push for reforms on immigration within the EU anyway?"

Khan said, "The Tories who support Leave want to limit the rights of migrants even further. The last thing I want is for people living in Britain to be even more oppressed than they are, or to be deported if Britain leaves the EU."

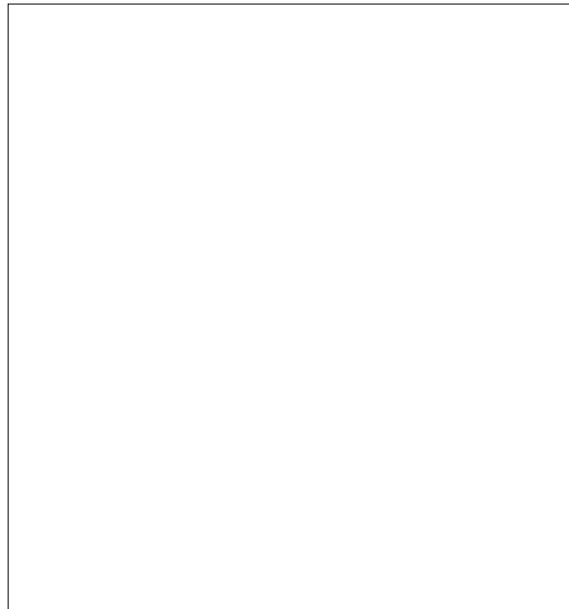
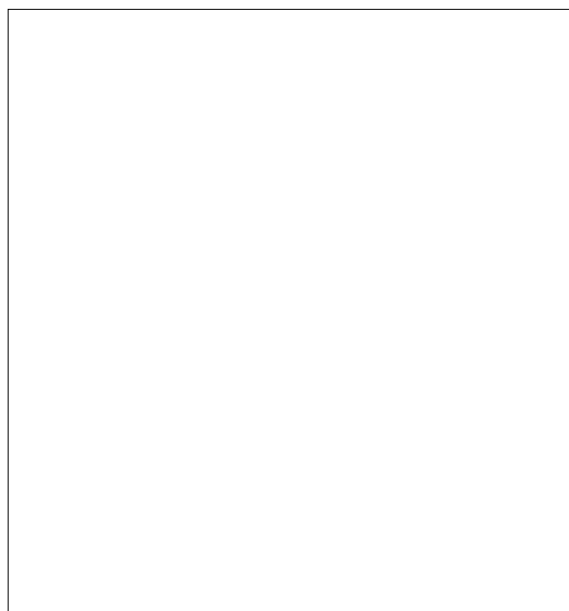
Michalopoulou said, "Britain was already allowed to change the law regarding benefits for migrants, so Romanians and Bulgarians have specific restrictions."

"It won't get better if we don't fight."

Most had never heard an anti-racist case against the EU.

Young worker Ioan who is undecided told Socialist Worker, "The Fortress Europe argument made me think. What about Iraqis and Afghans when it comes to freedom of movement? Maybe it's not as free."

Some argued that leaving would strengthen the right. Julie Reid, a Labour councillor, said, "Global capitalism won't go away if we leave the EU—we'll be left in the hands



**THE REALITY of "freedom" inside Fortress Europe is the EU's Frontex border guards detaining refugees (top)**

**A WOMAN (above) joins 3,000 people at a picnic in Finland to welcome refugees**

of Michael Gove and the right wingers.

"Even Jeremy Corbyn has changed his position and a lot of that has to do with who we will be left with."

"The first thing the Tories would do is tear up workers' rights, they've destroyed the NHS and they'll tear into it even more. We might be stuck with them for another ten years."

Ameen Hadi, a council worker, said, "I hear what Julie says, but we've already got it. I've got a Tory government that says they won't let anyone in from Calais. Half the people at my work have already lost their jobs."

"Voting to remain strengthens David Cameron and George Osborne—I want to see them weak, divided and defeated."

### Watch on the web

● For videos of the full speeches from Manchester, go to [bit.ly/1UIXgpr](http://bit.ly/1UIXgpr)

● Socialist Worker has produced a short video of the Lexit meeting in London in May. To watch it, go to [socialistworker.co.uk/art/42780/L](http://socialistworker.co.uk/art/42780/L)

● For video of the debate between Caroline Lucas and Tom Hickey in Brighton go to [bit.ly/1UBiqCQ](http://bit.ly/1UBiqCQ)



Irish TD Brid Smith speaking in the Lexit video



## Remaining in the EU won't protect human rights

**Alistair Farrow** looks at where our human rights—and the forces that endanger them—really come from

DEFENDERS OF the European Union (EU) often argue that it protects human rights.

But European states violate these rights all the time.

Muslims are witch hunted inside the borders of EU states.

And these same states close their borders to people fleeing from the West's wars in the Middle East.

Tory justice secretary Michael Gove has threatened to repeal the Human Rights Act of 1998.

This made the principles set out in the European Convention on Human Rights into British law.

Some argue that leaving the EU would strip away all our rights.

But the EU and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) are separate organisations.

### Council

The ECHR was set up in the context of the Council of Europe which covers 47 countries, not just the EU's 28. And it is the ECHR, not the EU, which enforces the European Convention on Human Rights.

So leaving the EU would have no effect on the ability to take cases to the ECHR.

Norway is not a part of the EU, but people living there can still take cases to the ECHR.

Gove would find it difficult to get rid of the Human Rights Act.

In 2013 a High Court judge claimed that even if the Human Rights Act were to be repealed the Charter would still remain as part of British law.

And on the Remain side of the debate, Tory home secretary Theresa May said last month, "It isn't the EU we should leave but the ECHR and the jurisdiction of its court."

Both sides of the mainstream debate are led by people who want to attack rights for ordinary people.

**THERESA MAY wants to stay, Michael Gove wants to go—but both want to attack rights for ordinary people**

### READ MORE

#### The EU—a left case for exit

A Socialist Worker pamphlet by Joseph Choonara. Cover price £3 or ten copies for £20

Phone 020 7840 5600 to place your order



fighting discrimination or unfair dismissal may have to go to an employment tribunal which can cost up to £1,200.

In most immigration cases people cannot claim legal aid, which the Tories wanted to cut by £220 million in 2013.

The changes would have meant that thousands of people would not have had access to legal representation.

### Pushed

A campaign by lawyers and their supporters pushed the Tories back.

The EU did nothing to defend our right to a fair trial then.

The refugee crisis has shown that human rights under capitalism are not universal and can be taken away if it suits the ruling class.

Last month the Tories blocked an amendment to their poisonous Immigration Act that would have allowed 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees into Britain.

Only a campaign by anti-racists won a partial retreat.

Working class people would have few protections if we had not fought for them.

We have to defend these rights but we mustn't forget how they were won. Nor should we rely on capitalist institutions to protect us from the worst aspects of a rotten system.

### More online

See our EU resources page at: [bit.ly/1UIXgz5](http://bit.ly/1UIXgz5)

**Both sides of the debate are led by people who want to get rid of rights**



# Activists take on the Prevent agenda

by NICK CLARK

**A LARGE conference last Saturday showed the potential to build a campaign to stop the government's Prevent strategy, which targets Muslims.**

Over 300 anti-racists attended the Prevent, Islamophobia and Civil Liberties conference in south east London.

It was hosted by Students not Suspects but involved many other groups.

It drew out criticisms of Prevent, which forces public sector workers to spy on Muslims and report anyone they suspect of "radicalisation".

Luton school student Rahman Mohammadi described how he was targeted by teachers and police at school for carrying pro-Palestinian badges and leaflets.

He said, "I was brought to a special constable who was employed by the school to deal with Prevent.

"He sat me down and questioned me for a good ten to twenty minutes on my views about Palestine and Israel.

**THE PREVENT strategy treats Muslims, even children, as potential terrorists**

"At the end he said, 'Rahmaan, I don't want you to be speaking about Palestine.'

"I said, well what about lunchtimes and break times. Surely I can talk about what I want with my friends.

"He said, well no you can't. I don't want you to be talking about Palestine."

Mohammadi said police were also sent to his house to interrogate him.

He added that the reason he was targeted "wasn't just about Palestine. It was that a Muslim person was supporting Palestine."

## Extremism

Writer Arun Kundnani said that Prevent is part of a wider Islamophobic agenda pushed by both Labour and Tory governments.

He said, "David Cameron talked about a generational struggle against Islamist extremism. We have our own generational struggle for the right to be radical.

"Since Prevent was introduced we've repeatedly been told by ministers the story about why terrorism happens.

"It says terrorism is caused by the presence of extremist ideology. The government defines extremist ideology as a minority version of Islam—sometimes it refers to it as Islamism.

"But it claims it's capable of capturing the minds of Muslims and turning them into terrorists."

Sessions throughout the day discussed how to fight Prevent.

Irfan Raja is from the Waltham Forest Council of Mosques.

He said Muslim organisations should not engage "knowingly or unknowingly" with Prevent programmes.

Malia Bouattia, the NUS student union's president elect, also spoke.

She described how the NUS' Students not Suspects campaign had led the fight against Prevent on campuses.

She said, "What needs to be done is for Prevent to be dismantled and uprooted.

"We need a broad coalition of opposition to defeat Prevent."

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# Greedy food giant swallows up firms at workers' expense

Food production company 2 Sisters Food Group has attacked workers to pay for its rapid growth. **Nick Clark** investigates the rise of a monster—and how workers are fighting back

**BOPARAN HOLDINGS Ltd**, 2 Sisters' parent company, has quietly become Britain's largest food and drink manufacturer by attacking workers' pay and conditions.

Ranjit Singh and Baljinder Boparan, the chief executive officer and director of 2 Sisters, are Boparan Holdings' sole shareholders.

They saw the company move to the head of the pack last September.

But success comes at a price. The past few years have seen 2 Sisters post big losses, including some £29 million last year, £20 million in 2014 and £13 million in 2013.

In its last accounts, the company blamed the threat of bird flu, food deflation and "negative consumer sentiment" following Food Standards Agency reports on the campylobacter bacteria.

## Accounts

Accounts for Boparan Holdings in the same year spoke of "streamlining operations" at Gunstones Bakery and Fox's Biscuits to help deal with the losses.

This referred to an attempted pay freeze for workers at Gunstones and some 91 job cuts at Fox's.

This is how 2 Sisters try to offset the costs of their expansion—slashing jobs, driving down wages and attacking workers' conditions.

A fresh round of attacks on pay (see below) are no one-offs. They reflect a pattern across the industry as bosses try to offset the cost of the new minimum wage. Similar attacks are ongoing at



2 SISTERS workers on strike on Thursday of last week in Newport, South Wales

PICTURE: JULIE SHERRY

Samworth Brothers' food factories in Leicester and fish supplier Icelandic Seachill, which sells Saucy Fish.

But 2 Sisters in particular have form. In 2014 they got rid of more than 420 jobs at Gunstones and the Bfawu union has estimated that 2

Sisters has axed 2,000 jobs while expanding.

But there are signs that 2 Sisters can be beaten. Strikes at Gunstones last year saw workers break through bosses' attempts at a pay freeze. In 2012 strikes at 2 Sisters sites in the

West Midlands saw workers beat off a similar attack.

With a fight already building at two factories (see below)—and a possible third in the pipeline—there's a real chance that 2 Sisters bosses could be stopped in their tracks.

## This is how 2 Sisters took over

**AN** index measuring food production companies by their turnover showed that Boparan Holdings had shot up from 20th to first place in just five years.

It got there the same way you win a game of Monopoly—by buying everything.

In 2011, 2 Sisters bought up Northern Foods in a deal worth more than £300 million.

Among other factories, the buyout gave 2 Sisters ownership of Pennine Foods, as well as the nearby Gunstones bakery and Fox's Biscuits.

2 Sisters also bought the RF



Some brands 2 Sisters owns

Brookes site in Newport that same year.

It came after a series of acquisitions over the previous five years.

Next came the purchase of Dutch meat company Vion's British arm in 2013.

By the time it reached the top, 2 Sisters employed more than 20,000 workers across 35 different sites—with a turnover last year of more than £900 million.

## Workers at 2 Sisters strike against bosses' attacks

**BFAWU** union members at 2 Sisters' Pennine Foods in Sheffield have held two 48-hour strikes in the past few weeks.

Their latest strike ended on Monday of this week (see page 19).

And Bfawu members at another 2 Sisters factory—RF Brookes in Newport in South Wales—followed their lead last Thursday and Friday.

Bosses there want to make up the new minimum wage by transferring workers onto new shift patterns with different pay rates.

Unite union members at a 2 Sisters pizza factory in Nottingham have also begun a strike ballot over similar attacks.

Arron was on the picket



Pickets at Pennine Foods

line at RF Brookes. He explained how 2 Sisters' new contract scam works.

He said, "They've combined shift allowances into the hourly rate so they can lawfully say they've met the requirement."

"It means a lot of people are getting less or the

same amount as they were before."

The company expanded aggressively over the past five years with a series of buyouts and acquisitions (see right).

## Redundancies

But it paid for its expansion with pay cuts and redundancies at its newly acquired sites.

One of those sites is RF Brookes, which 2 Sisters bought from Premier Foods in 2011.

Bfawu rep David Mort said, "When 2 Sisters first bought us around five years ago, my old director told me it's the worst thing that's ever happened."

"2 Sisters' reputation precedes them."

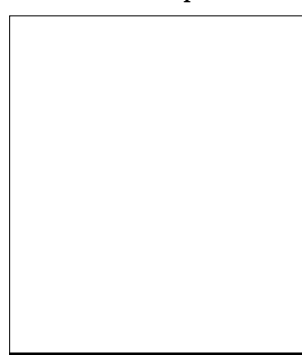
"With all the strikes in the previous years in

2 Sisters you can see what kind of company it is.

"2 Sisters is not a nice company to work for. It's horrible coming to work these days. Horrible."

He added, "The morale on the shop floor is the worst it's been in 24 years."

"A number of people have left in the past



Ranjit Singh, 2 Sisters CEO

few months."

But the strike looks like it could turn things around, with a strong turnout on the picket line.

Arron said, "We had about 150 out on the picket line at its peak."

"We've managed to turn away about seven wagons."

And David added, "I've never been on strike before in my life. Being part of this is fantastic."

"We're showing the management that we won't put up with bullying."

"It's nice to see people develop a backbone and fight against the bullies."

"The only way to deal with a bully is to stand up to them."

"And that's what these lot are—bullies."



## IN BRIEF

**Workers battle on at Sheffield BIS**

WORKERS AT the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) in Sheffield struck for two days last Thursday and Friday against office closures. The planned closure was confirmed last month.

But the PCS union has said it is in talks with BIS management.

PCS members are also balloting for action short of a strike, with the result due on Friday of this week.

**Protesters say frack off, Barclay's**

SOME 25 anti-fracking campaigners protested outside the Barclay's bank in Barnsley last Saturday.

Barclays own a 97 percent share in Third Energy, which North Yorkshire County Council has just allowed to start fracking in Ryedale.

**Dave Gibson**

**Turkish group targeted by police**

A TURKISH-speaking community group in north London has been targeted by police, allegedly on the grounds of "fighting terrorism".

Officers raided the community centre of the socialist Anatolian People's Cultural Centre in Tottenham and closed it down last month. At the time the European Union (EU) and British government were negotiating with Turkey to restrict migration.

Community members are convinced that the British government acted at the request of Turkey to silence a radical socialist group.

**Simon Hester**

●Protest Saturday 11 June, 2pm at Edmonton police station, London, N9 0PW

**Rally to remember Battle of Orgreave**

FORMER MINERS, trade unionists and others will rally in Sheffield on Saturday 18 June to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Orgreave.

The battle took place on 18 June 1984 when police attacked striking miners who were picketing at the Orgreave coking plant.

●Saturday 18 June, 5pm, Orgreave Lane, Sheffield, S13 9NE

**City cleaners set to start all-out strike**

CLEANERS WORKING in the City of London were set to begin an all-out strike on Friday of this week.

The members of the United Voices of the World union are taking action over the sacking of several cleaners.

They are also fighting for union recognition and the London Living Wage.

●See United Voices of the World union on Facebook

## NHS



NHS BURSARY students marched in London last Saturday (see below)

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

# BMA activists oppose deal for junior doctors

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

MEMBERS ON the left of the British Medical Association's (BMA) junior doctors' committee have broken their silence over the proposed junior doctors' contract deal.

This follows the decision by the committee not to recommend accepting or rejecting the proposed deal to BMA members last Friday.

Yannis Gourtsoyannis, who sits on the committee, told Socialist Worker, "This is an unacceptable contract and it is likely to be very regressive."

"It's still a fact that our evenings and weekends will be eroded and it's still a fact that

it is gender discriminatory.

"I would vote against this contract."

The proposed deal was cobbled together between the BMA and Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt after negotiations last month.

**Pressure**

The fact that Hunt was forced back to the negotiating table after imposing a dangerous contract is a sign of the pressure he was under.

But the deal will make Saturdays and Sundays ordinary working days and reduce extra night shift pay from 50 percent to 37 percent.

Junior doctors working less

than one weekend in eight would only be paid normal pay rates and those working up to one in two would receive between 3 and 10 percent extra.

The BMA will now hold 120 road shows across England ahead of the referendum being held between 17 June and 1 July. Yannis said that, "Members should rest assured that the BMA will honour the outcome of the referendum."

"If members reject the deal, we will return to battle."

Junior doctors need to organise to defeat the contract and get the strikes back on.

●Longer online at [bit.ly/1UmffTr](http://bit.ly/1UmffTr)

## HEALTHCARE STUDENTS

OVER 500 people joined a march against the Tories scrapping NHS students' bursaries in central London last Saturday (pictured, top).

It was organised by the Bursary or Bust campaign.

Sophie, an occupational therapist, had come with a Unison union delegation from Homerton University Hospital in east London.

She said, "It's a Tory government, it doesn't

care about the NHS".

"What they're doing to 'save money' is all short-term, but in the long-term it's dismantling everything that we've built."

To chants of "Jeremy Hunt, shame on you" and "Tories out" the march went from St Thomas' Hospital to the Department of Health.

Speakers included NUS president-elect Malia Bouattia and leading

**Bursary or Bust campaigner Danielle Tiplady.**

●NHS CAMPAIGNERS in Chorley, Lancashire, plan to march against the downgrading of the Chorley and South Ribble A&E department this Saturday.

They have been holding weekly protests at the hospital gates since April. Assemble 11 June, 12.30pm at Astley Park Gates.

## OBITUARY

**Sherri Yanowitz 1942–2016**

SHERRI YANOWITZ, who died of cancer last week, was a tremendous fighter against injustice, oppression and capitalism all her life.

She lived her life in the struggle from her early days in the US where she was involved in the black freedom movement as a member of SNCC (Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee), the free speech fight at Berkeley and the movement against the Vietnam War.

She came to Britain in 1969 and threw herself into the struggle. She joined



Sherri Yanowitz

the International Socialists, later the SWP, and was a member for many years. She co-designed the "Stuff the Jubilee" badge from 1977.

Sherri was active in building solidarity with the Miners' Strike in 1984-5 and in union branches where she worked.

During the strike at Wapping printworks she was on the News of the World clerical chapel strike committee. She later helped to build the local Stop the War organisation and "Artists against War".

In recent years Sherri became an activist in rs21 (Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st century).

Sherri was a warm and generous soul with a mischievous sense of humour which she shared with her partner Neil Rogall.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have known such a courageous and inspirational person as Sherri. **Ashok Pursani**

## TRANSPORT

# Court ruling could derail Southern train strike

By RAYMIE KIERNAN

A JUDGE banned the Aslef train drivers' union from going on strike last week.

Bosses at Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) had applied for an injunction to override the union's democratic vote.

Some 84 percent voted for strikes on an 82 percent turnout on Southern and Gatwick Express services.

The judge found in the bosses' favour.

Bosses were granted a provisional injunction preventing industrial action until claims Aslef acted "unlawfully" can be investigated at a full hearing, set for 27 June.

That trial date comes at a very convenient date for GTR bosses.

It is very close to the end of the four-week period Southern train guards have to accept a new role, which they oppose.

If they don't accept they can be sacked eight weeks later.

The guards' RMT union has yet to call more strikes in their dispute over changes to the guards' job.

Union leaders should refuse to be cowed by the anti-union laws



On strike last month

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

and defy them.

If they don't, the injunction against Aslef will be a blow to escalating the dispute over driver only operation (DOO).

Bosses want to further roll out DOO across the network.

But unions argue that this is being imposed without negotiation and is less safe than having safety duties also carried out by train guards.

The anti-union laws are designed to make union leaders police their own members and undermine the collective strength of workers.

But taking unofficial action can beat the bosses back.

## TRAM DRIVERS

CROYDON TRAM drivers' union Aslef has announced a two-day strike next Wednesday and Thursday in a dispute over pay.

It follows a 100 percent vote for strikes.

The south London tram services are operated,

under Transport for London branding, by multinational FirstGroup.

Workers want a better offer than the 2.6 percent rise the bosses have offered—as it doesn't make up for cuts made to their pensions.

## OFFSHORE OIL

# Start ballot to beat bosses

NORTH SEA oil and gas barons are preparing to inflict yet more misery on offshore workers.

One in three firms plan further job cuts this year.

More than 40 percent are planning "cost-cutting measures", according to a Bank of Scotland report on the industry.

Tens of thousands of workers have lost their jobs in the past couple of years.

Bosses are using the downturn in oil prices to impose longer shifts, pay cuts and more casualisation of the workforce.

Workers have repeatedly warned of the implications for safety offshore and fear a major disaster is waiting to happen. All they have heard from the politicians are calls for more tax breaks for the bosses.

The Scottish National Party's £12 million flagship

retraining fund for sacked workers has delivered cash to fewer than 100 people.

Workers want their unions to act.

Earlier this year the new Offshore Coordinating Group (OCG) brought together all the offshore unions.

But many are still waiting to see what it will deliver.

An announcement by Shell in recent months that it was shedding hundreds more jobs provoked outrage among Wood Group workers on the Shell contract.

For some it was the third redundancy notice in a year.

Their Unite union announced it officially went into dispute almost two weeks ago.

The only thing the bosses will listen to is workers stopping production.

That's why it's time for the unions to get on with the ballot.



## FOOD WORKERS

# Strikers block gates and plan escalation

by NICK CLARK

**FOOD FACTORY** workers in Sheffield struck against bosses' plans to cut their weekend, bank holiday and night shift pay on Sunday and Monday.

The strikers work at Pennine Foods, making ready meals for Marks and Spencer.

It is owned by food manufacturer 2 Sisters (see page 17).

Bfawu union members at Pennine have already struck for two days last month. Now there are plans for another walkout from 16 to 22 June.

This will be coordinated with a strike at 2 Sisters' RF Brookes factory in Newport, South Wales, where workers are facing similar attacks.

## Attacks

Bfawu rep Debbie Loy told Socialist Worker, "Since the new minimum wage came in the same attacks happened at all 2 Sisters sites.

"Some of the workers here could lose £5,000 a year."

Picket lines at Pennine have been big—and have stopped lorries getting in and out of the factory. But



CONFIDENT PICKETS outside Pennine Foods in Sheffield

PICTURE: TREVOR JONES

now bosses are freezing the ready meals and sending out lorries early to try and avoid the pickets.

On Monday police threatened pickets with arrest if they blocked any more lorries at the factory gates.

Debbie said, "They're playing crafty because they sent

lorries in and out the day before the strike and took some stuff to freeze".

But she added, "We've leafleted Marks & Spencer before. People that shop there think that they're buying ready meals that are fresh.

"We're going to leaflet

them and tell them it's been frozen.

"If they're going to start freezing them, we'll start going on four or five-day strikes.

"If that's what needs to happen, then that's what we'll do."

Thanks to Trevor Jones

## ARGOS WORKERS

# Strikes over outsourcing

SOME 420 Argos lorry drivers, warehouse and admin workers began a six-day strike at Lutterworth in Leicestershire on Tuesday.

The action runs to Sunday when the firm is set to transfer 96 drivers to haulier Eddie Stobart Ltd (ESL).

The Unite union fears that

this could lead to attacks on pay, conditions and job security.

They demand that the conditions of workers transferred are protected. They also demand good severance packages for workers who refuse to work for ESL.

## SOCIAL WORKERS

# Debating refugee solidarity

UP TO 250 people attended the Social Work Action Network (Swan) conference in central London last Saturday.

It took place before a European social work day of solidarity with refugees, when a delegation from the conference went to Calais (see page 3).

A key theme of this year's conference was resistance to racism and solidarity with refugees. Another session on

the drive to privatise social services heard from trade unionists organising against the Tory cuts.

Swan's strength is that it unites workers, students and people who use social work services to fight for a radical vision of what social work should be. This year's conference shows that the project is going strong

Raymie Kiernan

Go to socialworkfuture.org

More on socialistworker.co.uk

## ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-FASCISM

# Anti-fascists in Rotherham stand firm against Pegida

ANTI-FASCISTS joined forces with Rotherham 12 justice campaigners to oppose the fascist Pegida in Rotherham last Saturday.

It was organised by Unite Against Fascism (UAF) in response to the 17th fascist march in the South Yorkshire town in just 18 months.

UAF's local rally of 150 matched Pegida's

national mobilisation.

The Rotherham 12 are a group of Muslim men who were charged with "violent disorder" after a march by Nazi Britain First last September.

Racists are trying to exploit the child sexual abuse scandal in Rotherham.

The Rotherham 12 have a court hearing in October.

## BRIGHTON

# Activists outnumber Nazis

AROUND 400 people marched in Brighton last Saturday to stop the Nazi South Coast Resistance holding a rally against migrants.

The dozen or so fascists had kept their assembly point secret.

But the Nazis were tracked down, forced to abandon their rally and retreated to a sea-front bar where they were taunted and barracked.

Anti-fascists then moved

off for a lively demonstration through the city centre.

Meanwhile the Brighton-based Hummingbird project mounted a "Refugees are welcome" bloc on the Kemptown Carnival parade.

Fitz from Brighton and Hove Stand Up to Racism said, "We made it clear that racists are not welcome in Brighton, but that migrants and refugees are."

Ken Montague

## SCOTLAND

# Fascist SDL left humiliated

AROUND 300 anti-fascists saw off a pathetic showing of the Scottish Defence League (SDL) in Glasgow's George Square last Saturday.

The fascist group had hoped to stage a rally outside Glasgow Central Mosque, but were denied permission.

There were speakers from a range of organisations, including the Scottish National Party, Green Party, the FBU and EIS unions and Unite Against Fascism.

Charlotte Ahmed

SHAFIQ MOHAMMED, who was arrested on a refugee solidarity demonstration last November, is facing charges of racially aggravated breach

of the peace and resisting arrest. Campaigners planned to rally outside the court on Thursday 9 June.

10am, Ayr Sheriff Court, Sheriff Court House, Wellington Square, Ayr KA7 1EE.

Send messages of support to contact@supportshafiq.scot For more info go to supportshafiq.scot

ACTIVISTS PLAN to demonstrate against racist thug Donald Trump when he visits Scotland on 22 June

He is running to be the US Republican party's presidential candidate.

Go to Stand Up To Trump! Protest Donald Trump's visit to Britain on Facebook

## LEICESTER

ANTI-FASCISTS gathered at the clock tower in Leicester last Saturday to stop Britain First setting up a stall.

The Nazi group had held stalls during the previous two weekends.

Having been chased out of town on both occasions,

the Nazis didn't show up for a third time. They decided to poison the streets of Canterbury instead.

The counter demo was called by the Unite union's Community branch and was supported by Leicester Unite Against Fascism.

David Wainwright

## EUROPEAN UNION

AROUND 100 people joined a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) meeting in London last week to put the socialist case against the European Union.

Speakers included Mick Cash from the RMT union, Sally Campbell for the Socialist Workers Party,

Peter Taaffe for the Socialist Party and Paul Embery, a member of the FBU union.

Nana Asante spoke in favour of staying in the EU. The former Labour mayor of Harrow, north west London, had stood for TUSC last year.

For further TUSC meetings go to tusc.org.uk/events

## FIGHTING THE CUTS

# Barnet libraries barney

BARNET council library workers in north London were set to strike for three days from Monday of next week against the Tory council's plans to outsource the library service.

The Unison union members are fighting 47 percent cuts to library posts. Staffed hours at libraries are to be cut by 70 percent. This will mean for most of the time libraries are open under 15 year olds unaccompanied by an adult will not be able to use libraries.

Barnet Unison library convenor Hugh Jordan said, "Our members are angry at proposals which look to sack half of them and then outsource them to another employer. Every day we hear of another library closing due to cuts, handing over the service to volunteers or outsourcing.

"There needs to be a

national response to the systemic destruction of the national library service."

There are other battles going on in London to defend libraries, at both Labour and Tory councils. Unison should coordinate those fights and bring workers out together.

Raymie Kiernan

Send solidarity messages to Helen.Davies@barnetunison.org.uk

Join the picket lines

Monday 13 June, Mill Hill Library (Hartley Avenue, Mill Hill, London NW7 2HX) from 8.30am

Tuesday 14 June, North Finchley (Ravensdale Ave, North Finchley N12 9HP) from 8.30am followed by a demonstration outside Barnet House 12-1pm

Wednesday 15 June, Chipping Barnet Library (3 Stapylton Road, Barnet, EN5 4QT) from 8.30am



# Labour councils make Tory cuts

Teaching assistants face vicious attacks at the hands of Labour councils.  
Raymie Kiernan talks to workers who are refusing to take it lying down

**LABOUR COUNCILS' spineless implementation of Tory cuts means real suffering. And the workers affected are angry.**

Teaching assistant Claire works in a special needs school doing a job she "absolutely loves".

She thought she would be doing the job until she retired. That was until "Durham County Council decided I should do the same job for over £2,000 a year less".

Durham is a Labour authority. It recently voted to sack 2,700 teaching assistants (TAs) and rehire them on worse contracts that will cut their pay by up to 23 percent.

Claire said, "Apparently it's all to do with 'fairness' and 'equality' but I can't see anything fair or equal about this."

The council claims if it doesn't attack the majority female and low paid TAs it could face equal pay claims.

## Abhorrent

Labour MP for Easington Grahame Morris has called the sackings "abhorrent".

"I've voted Labour all my life," Claire told Socialist Worker. "It's supposed to be for working people but it has stabbed us in the back."

"I won't be voting Labour again if this goes through."

In Derby, the Labour-run council has launched a similar assault.

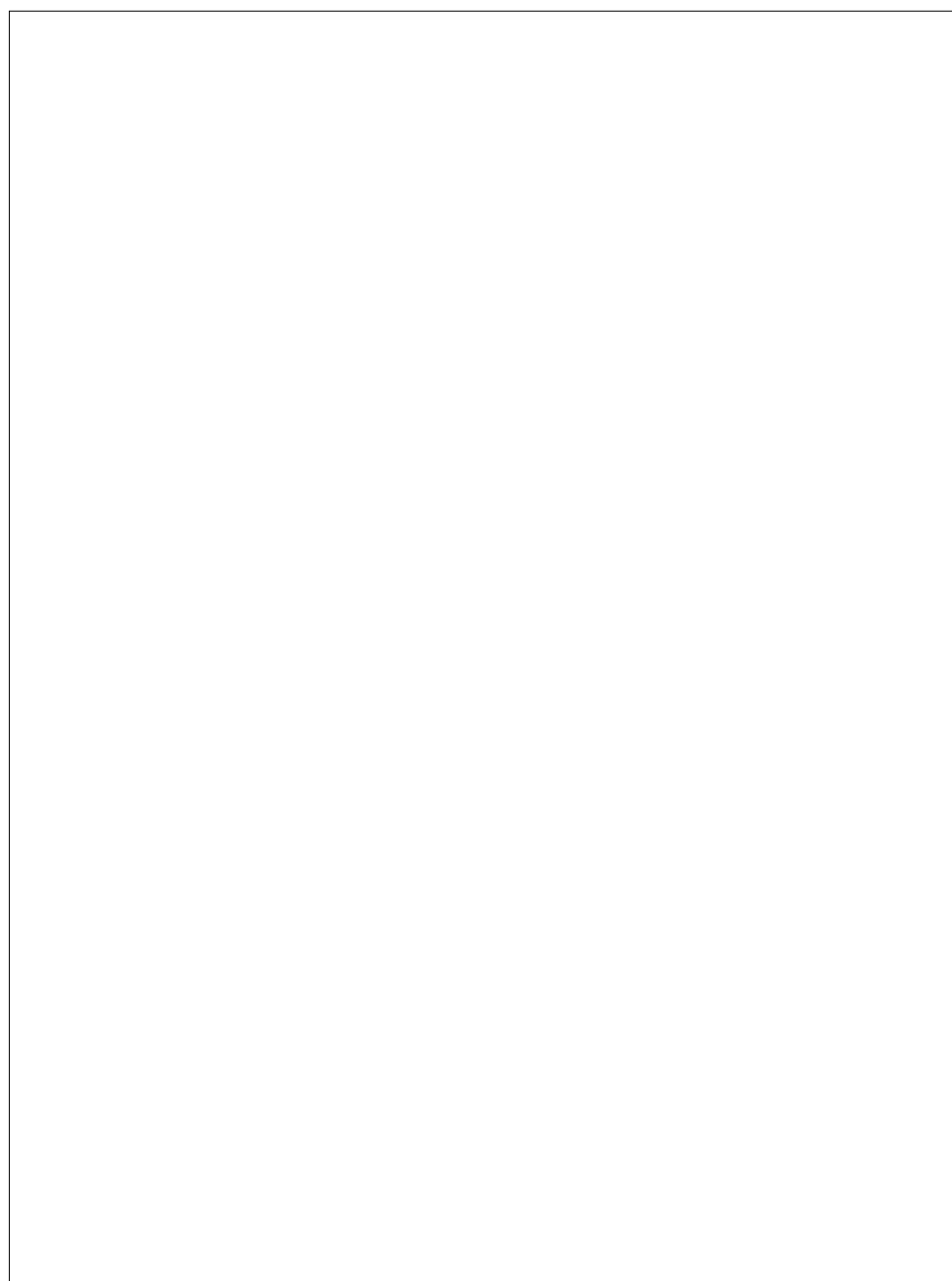
TAs who refused to accept a 20-25 percent pay cut were sacked this week—despite the council's package failing its own equality test.

Instead of bleating about "difficult choices" why not defy the Tories and call for a fightback?

Labour's cowardice has cruel consequences.

Claire said, "I'm also going to lose the money I earn from doing respite care."

"I go straight from work



**DURHAM County Council has slashed teaching assistants' pay by up to 23 percent**

two nights a week and one day a weekend. I look after two girls with very complex medical needs so I've had to have a lot of training to look after the girls.

"If I'm having to work an extra hour every night, I won't be able to have them."

It is people like Claire who face the real difficult choices. Does she give up the caring work that provides a lifeline for families or work seven days a week to continue that and survive?

Claire looks after an 18 year old woman called

Chloe whose mum has spoken out about the devastating impact of Durham Labour's cuts on her family.

Chloe's mum Claire said the cuts would affect "many other families".

She said the combination of challenges Chloe

faces means "forming any relationships outside of her immediate family is rare".

Chloe requires 24-hour care, which takes its toll on Claire and her husband. The respite that teaching assistant Claire provides is "a lifeline".

The few hours a week that gives Chloe "her own independent social life" is "invaluable and irreplaceable".

## Cheated

The Durham TAs feel cheated and undervalued by Labour. TA Claire said, "We don't just wash paint pots—schools couldn't run without us."

"We're not going to take this lying down."

The Unison union represents most of the TAs in Durham. But many worry about the lack of communication from their union.

Unison has said it will only ballot for industrial action after a council consultation period ends on 15 July.

But the council has already voted this attack through, and the campaign has been going on for seven or eight months.

Unison has said the earliest strike would be mid-October.

"That's just crazy," Claire said. "If we're going to strike it needs to be September when we can have the biggest impact at the start of term."

The Durham TAs need to pressure their union officials to move quicker into battle.

In Derby Unison members recently voted by 84 percent for industrial action, but the council's attack has already gone through.

If the officials would rather maintain a cosy relationship with Labour councillors than fight for their members' interests then they must be swept aside.

The TAs can win.

Go to County Durham Trades Council Supports Teaching Assistants on Facebook

## IN BRIEF

### The janitors strike back in Glasgow

JANITORS ON strike in Glasgow rallied outside a Labour group council meeting on Monday, chanting, "Labour group—out."

They are on strike for a week against pay inequality at the council's semi-privatised firm Cordia. Bosses refuse to pay the janitors the same as other workers who do similar jobs.

Labour doesn't want to intervene because "arm's length" firms such as Cordia are helping it drive down conditions.

"You're a disgrace—funding your own lifestyles," one janitor shouted. "None of us will be voting for you next year." Another striker bellowed, "Never."

### 'Labour must resist'—says councillor

TRYING TO run services with funding cuts is an "impossible challenge".

That's according to Rachel Heywood, a south London Labour councillor.

Lambeth Labour last week suspended her from the Labour group for six months for opposing Lambeth Labour cuts.

Heywood said, "My duty is to represent my constituents and give a voice to people whose voices are often not heard."

But she warned her party that it could suffer "the most terrible of lost opportunities" by not launching national resistance to council cuts.

"Policies that are all about wealth creation and economic growth do not answer the needs of the people I represent," Heywood told Socialist Worker.

Some Labour councillors see people as numbers on council balance sheets and accept the horrendous impact of their cuts on people's lives. They are falling into the Tories' trap.

**More online...**  
Full interview at [bit.ly/1U8NEmc](http://bit.ly/1U8NEmc)